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ABSTRACT

This congressional hearing examines vocational education, adult education, and job training initiatives in Vermont and the role of these programs in developing work force development legislation. Testimony includes statements from a U.S. Senator and individuals representing the following: Vermont Department of Employment and Training; Vermont State Colleges; Vermont Department of Social Welfare; Agency of Commercial and Community Development; Burlington Technical Center; Career and Lifelong Learning, Vermont Department of Education; Lyndon State College; Vermont Adult Education Board; Executive Team of Central Vermont Adult Basic Education; Welfare to Work Programs, Vermont Department of Social Welfare; Mahoney Hardware; Vermont Science and Education Center; Vermont Heating and Ventilating; Vermont Technical College; Champlain Initiative; Governor's Rehabilitation Advisory Council; School-to-Work, Randolph region; Rutland Economic Development Corporation, Rutland Regional Educational Alliance; School-to-Work, Upper Valley; River Bend Career and Technical Center; Bradford Area Workforce Investment Board; Northern New England Tradeswomen; and Northland Job Corps Center. Other statements are from students, apprentices, and instructors from the Northland Job Corps, Essex Technical Center, and Burlington Technical Center. (YLB)

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INNOVATIVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

ED 411 422

HEARING

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FIFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

AN EXAMINATION OF INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES PERTAINING TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, ADULT EDUCATION, AND JOB TRAINING

MAY 19, 1997
RANDOLPH, VT

Printed for the use of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources

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INNOVATIVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

MONDAY, MAY 19 1997

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES,
Randolph, VT.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 8 a.m., at the Vermont Technical College, Randolph, VT, Senator Jeffords (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senator Jeffords.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JEFFORDS

The **CHAIRMAN.** It is nice to have you here. We are looking forward to the testimony this morning. This is a field hearing of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. I came to Vermont, obviously, because I have a tremendous affection for it, but also because I know what is going on here is beginning to be what really needs to be done in order to get our State in a position to have greater opportunities for all of our people. And there is nothing more critical than the subject that we are talking about today.

This morning's hearing will examine vocational education, adult education and job training initiatives here in Vermont and the role of these programs in developing work force development legislation.

Goal Two of the National Education Goals states that this Nation should reach a 90 percent high school graduation rate by the year 2000. To make this goal a realty, we must improve the education and potential employment opportunities for all young Americans. We must provide today's students with an array of learning experiences that will sufficiently prepare them to be active participants in our global economy.

Our international competitors have been leaders in making the important link between education and work. Germany, for example, has long been a model for vocational education and job training.

Although we are not Europe, we are beginning to make some progress in the vocational education arena. I have recently seen examples of this progress right here in Vermont. Vergennes Union High School has a biotech School To Work program while working with private industry for their high school students. And yet, on the other hand, they still do not have a certificate to be given to those students so that they can show that they have gained the technical knowledge which they have gained. I recently visited Essex Technical Center and was quite pleased with the quality and variety of vocational education programs that Essex offers—programs that serve all students, ranging from at-risk youth to adults; and they do have a certificates to give to their young people to enable other people to know what their skills are.

In 1983, the report "A Nation At Risk" was published. That report raised the following question, "whether the United States would have an adequately trained work force to meet the goals and challenges of the 21st Century."

It is now 14 years later, and we have failed to implement strategies that will enable our work force to meet the demands posed by an ever changing international economy. Our inaction has been costly, as evident by the following statistics.

1. According to latest census information, 22 percent of the population of the United States, aged 25 and over, has completed less than 12 years of schooling.

2. A 1993 Federal Department of Education study found that nearly half of the adults in the United States were not sufficiently proficient in English to use a bus schedule to calculate the length of a trip.

Last Friday, Mary Paul Hankinson, the Executive Director of Vermont Adult Learning, and many of her students testified before the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. Ms. Hankinson's testimony stated that 80,000 Vermonters are in need of remedial educational assistance.

3. A Committee for Economic Development study estimates that each year's class of high school dropouts—this is nationwide—costs over $240 billion in lost income and taxes over the lifetime of those students. This study also estimates that an additional $10 billion is spent on paying for crime, drug and prison expenses with each class of dropouts. With each class of dropouts.

4. American employers spend approximately $30 to $40 billion annually on formal worker training. This does not take into account the additional remedial training which adds over $200 billion to the overall cost. I would point out that, in Europe, they spend the same time amount of money, but they spend it during the high schools years, the businesses do, helping train young people in the high schools. So they leap ahead of us, right there, by a number of years by just having their young people equipped when they come out of high school.

Although it is critical for businesses to allocate dollars for training, we need to reexamine where these dollars are expended. Perhaps the training would not be as costly if the dollars were spent in the early years of our educational delivery system, talking about K through 12. We have some substantial programs—I got myself in hot water in Vermont a week or two ago when I announced that this process of social promotion has to go, and I still believe that, and I am working all I can nationwide to make sure that we do better in the K through 12 program.

One result following the publication of "A Nation At Risk Report" is that we have issued numerous reports pertaining to the status of the work force education and training. During President Bush's Administration, one report that received considerable attention and still serves as an excellent reference document in setting priorities for vocational education and job training is SCANS. The document

SCANS stands for Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills.

SCANS found a lack of communication and coordination between the education system and the business community. The report stated, "Part of the difficulty is that employees and school personnel are passing each other like ships in the night; one speaks in Morse code, the other uses signal flags. As a consequence of this miscommunication, secondary school students often see little connection between what they do in school and how they expect to make a living." And there is nothing more critical than relevance in education. You can't expect kids to want to learn unless they know why they are there, and that that learning is really going to benefit them.

The SCANS report issued several findings, which I intend to use as a guide as I begin developing work force development legislation over the next several weeks. These findings are.

1. Education standards must be established which are benchmarked to the highest standards in the world.

2. States should take responsibility for assuring that virtually all students achieve a certificate of initial mastery.

3. A comprehensive system of technical and professional certificates and associate degrees should be made available to students and adult workers who do not pursue a baccalaureate degree, that is, a commonly understood college education.

In addition to the three items I just have outlined, my legislation will focus on streamlining our Federal job training program.

My proposal will create a simple integrated work force development system that gives states, local communities and employers both the assistance and incentives to train individuals for real jobs.

I believe all of us, government officials, and members of the education and business communities, must support a work force development effort that enables all members of our society to receive the education and training they need at any point in their lifetime—whether it be the high school students searching for a biotech career, the adult who is desperate to trade a welfare check for a paycheck, the dislocated worker who needs to learn new skills to enhance their marketability, or the incumbent worker who requires additional education and training to keep pace with an ever-evolving global economy.

Goal Six of the National Education Goals states that "by the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship." That is the end of that goal. To meet this goal, educators, business leaders, and government officials agree that we need to restructure our education and work force training delivery system.

This consensus must serve as a clarion call to take immediate action to take immediate action to make every school in this Nation a success story, and to see to it that the students of all ages are sufficiently prepared to be active participants in our global society.

I look forward to hearing from all of our witnesses today, who will share with us their insight as to how we can not only meet Goal Six, but, more importantly, how Goal Six can be maintained.

And I would like to say that we are having a hearing today at a place for which I have the greatest admiration and respect, which is a leader, I think, not only in Vermont, of course, but nationwide, in how we can handle some of these problems.

So I have been kind of on the negatives, but we do have positives in Vermont. I mentioned Essex. I have been visiting the Rutland schools, and I know they are moving forward, and I know Brattleboro is making efforts. I intend to get around to the rest of the State. But we are here today to learn, and we are here today to listen to what is going on in the State. And my goal is to not to get politically popular, but to raise the awareness in Vermont of what needs to be done in order to make us a leader in the Nation.

Vermont has two of the three things which will attract business. It has a quality of life, and it has a work ethic unparalleled, I think, in the rest of the Nation. What we need is the skilled workers and the skills that will bring jobs to this State.

Right now, we are dealing with Husky, and we are having a little bit of a difficulty trying to figure out how to fulfill the requirements for skills, but they are coming here for those other two reasons. Now its up to us to make sure that they have the skills as well. That is why we are here in this institution, which can help us in that regard, and which has been active and doing a tremendous job.

The CHAIRMAN. Our first panel are members of the Vermont Human Resources Investment Council, and I would like them—they're already forward here. Susan Auld, a good friend, for many, many years—I shouldn't say that many years.

Ms. AULD. A few.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Susan Auld, Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Employment and Training; Charles Bunting, Chancellor of The Vermont State Colleges; Jane Kitchel, Commissioner of Vermont Department of Social Welfare; and William Shouldice, who is not here yet, I guess, Secretary of the Agency of the Commercial and Community Development.

STATEMENTS OF SUSAN AULD, COMMISSIONER, VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING; CHARLES BUNTING, CHANCELLOR, VERMONT STATE COLLEGES; JANE KITCHEL, COMMISSIONER, VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE; AND WILLIAM SHOULDICE, SECRETARY, AGENCY OF COMMERCIAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The CHAIRMAN. I am pleased to have you here, and we will proceed.

Susan, do you want to start?

Mr. BUNTING. I am going to start.

The CHAIRMAN. All right.

Mr. BUNTING. A comes before B. Senator Jeffords, I just want to thank you, for, in fact, the second time in 4 months for coming to Vermont for a hearing on a major piece of reauthorization. And perhaps there have been more than the two times that I have been experiencing, but first in February, inviting the Vermont higher education community to discuss reauthorization of higher education, and now work force development legislation.

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You honor us by doing so, and I do agree with your comment earlier that Vermont has some important messages, and perhaps some experiences or perspectives. I think, especially, that would be the case in the area of work force development.

I was thinking about the parallel, Senator, between your committee and the experience that we can have in Vermont. Your committee in Washington is about the broadest that one could ever find or imagine. You cover education, you cover human services, you cover welfare, you cover health. It is an extraordinary breadth, and that is a great advantage in terms of seeing the interconnection between all the different partners who must work together.

I also have found, coming from a place like Washington to Vermont, how much of an advantage we have, given our small scale and the general spirit toward the need to work together to accomplish things. We, too, can see the breadth that is necessary and the kinds of partnerships that are necessary if we are to accomplish any particular goal. And we can take advantage of those, given our scale.

I believe that that is proving to be the case. While we have a long way to go in terms of work force development, and particularly I would like to talk about my experience as cochair, with Susan Auld, of the Human Resources and Investment Council. In fact, I guess my presence on this panel might be Exhibit 1 of the point I am making about Vermont and its application to your challenge now.

I am here wearing at least two hats. First, as Chancellor of the diverse Vermont State Colleges; and, second, as cochair of the HRIC. And it is difficult, and it should be difficult, to tell those two hats apart.

For example, in the Vermont State colleges, we currently enroll as many as 700 welfare reform clients in the State of Vermont, who are engaged in degree programs, working toward improving their life opportunities, and particularly in the workplace. Second, at the other extreme, we also manage, with the University of Vermont, the full range of education and training services for the entire work force at IBM in Essex Junction.

If you think about those two roles, they are both essential roles in terms of work force development. And that means that, in turn, we have an interdependence within higher education with, on the one hand, the Agency of Human Services, Jane Kitchel's organization, her people, and on the other hand, we have an interdependence with private companies, large and small, throughout the State of Vermont.

I guess my first point would be to urge that, in your reauthorization and new directions for work force development, that kind of breadth and that kind of interdependence be put very high on the list of priorities in terms of what to emphasize and to attempt to accomplish.

I have some concerns about, at least, not directly in work force development, but, for example, the direction in welfare reform where, I think, last year there was a kind of a narrowing of perspective rather than a broadening, as, at least in Washington, there was a reduction of the role, a limitation on the role that higher education can play in terms of work force development for welfare clients, by reducing the long-term employment options, by insisting on the shorter term job-specific, when, in fact, our experience in Vermont would argue for just the other direction, in terms of inclusion of higher education and in terms of commitment to both long-term strategies and shorter terms ones.

I guess that—and there is no place, as you, yourself, commented, better to make that point than at a place like Vermont Tech, given the way in which this very small, focused institution has such a large impact across the board in terms of work force development and economic development in the State.

And, on the one hand, higher education, as just one illustration, has so much to offer to work force development, not only the training and education, but also providing quality information, research and development to the process, also serving as a kind of a broker in the area of work force development, as indeed we are with Vermont Tech. At the same time, I would say, from another point of view, don't let higher education off the hook. It is very important to insure that higher education stay involved and committed, and not wander off, when it comes to work force development.

How do we accomplish that breadth? That, really, is what I would now like to speak to and refer to our experience through the Human Resources Investment Council in Vermont. I would like to make about four points.

The first, to sustain a focus on the important job and outcomes that we are seeking. In the case of Vermont, all of our recent efforts in the 1990s came out of the experience of the deep recession of the early 1990s. What that has meant is that it has really encouraged us to keep a focus on improving the quality of jobs in Vermont and raising the incomes of Vermonters who continue to lag against national averages.

That focus on the real business is so important to sustain when it is easy to get lost on the intervening steps and on the organizations and institutions that we get involved with. For us, through the HVIC, it means we are working very hard in terms of trying to establish a system of assessment in order to measure, ultimately, whether or not we are accomplishing those major outcomes.

The second point I would make is urging that we be systemic and look at work force development in the broader system, just as you were a moment ago, connecting it to K-to-12 reform. I would also put it in terms of the wider range of partners that need to be a part of it, and also to think in broad terms about, for example, the contrast between the role of the high school student, say, in the junior year of high school, looking torward college, and the tremendous amount of information and support that that high school student can turn to when thinking about college, but contrasting that with the situation of adults and of employers when they are looking for further education and training to support work force development. There is virtually nothing of that at the same system of support, information, counseling, referral as one finds with the high school student thinking about the traditional direction of higher education.

The second point I would make here is that we need, in this systemic approach, both to attend to the needs of the customer and to assure there be a full quality, diverse range of providers available. There are some who would argue for an extreme approach to have vouchering, putting all the dollars in the hands of the consumers. I would argue against that. I think that would be a mistake, because the society has a responsibility to ensure that, with, certainly, power and determination in hand, the customer needs to be assured there is a range of training and education options available which fit the direction for high quality jobs for a State, both presently and in the future. I think we need to find the right balance in the legislation that you are seeking to develop.

The third point is on leadership. It is sort of an obvious point, but I think there are some specifics to make. First, in our experience in the HRIC it was only possible that the governor, supported by the legislature to be sure, but the governor is the one individual in the State, at least in a State like ours, who can pull together and connect all the pieces. It was only possible for the government to establish something like, in HRIC, across the board, public and private partnership.

I am thinking about that when I reflect on the house bill in work force development at this stage. I don't agree with the way in which final responsibilities are divided there between education and the governor in terms of different issues, different topics. I think that does not work in the direction of the breadth and the system that I am advocating, and I think, in a given State, especially in a small State like Vermont, the ultimate lead in responsibilities really needs to be with the chief executive of the State.

The fourth point, the need, to as we put it in our legislation, in Vermont, ensure that the business community, employers and employees, have the predominant role in terms of the level of State advice to the governor through something like an HRIC, or, at the regional level, with the work force investment boards which we also have in the State.

That is not as easily accomplished as said. Business people have other things as their obvious first priorities. They won't come to meetings, they won't come to councils, unless there is a real job to be done. And that is what we need to assure, I think, in the enabling legislation as well.

The final comment I would like to make is there was an interesting comment, I think, in William Raspberry's column about a week ago, and he commented that he thought that someday we might see, as the key event of this century, the GI bill coming out of World War II, when so many millions of Americans turned to further education and training for their future. He commented that perhaps all those returning veterans didn't even know it themselves, but were opening the doors to the era of knowledge in an interesting way that we are continuing to work on.

I guess, certainly, the role of further education, the concept of lifelong learning, its connection with jobs and careers, is one that we are coming to better and better understand, and have come to over the fifty years since, for example, the GI bill, but perhaps the next frontier is to assure that this still-growing commitment to further education and lifelong learning is matched with a system of work force development which assures a far greater payoff for employers and individuals in the form of better jobs and clearer paths to those jobs throughout their lifetimes. At the president of Motorola said recently, "I don't want engineers with four-year degrees; I want employees with 40-year degrees."

I think, Senator, that the work here that you have under way is the most important work that I could imagine, and I stand ready to be of assistance now, but also over the months ahead.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Susan?

We are putting the lights on for guidance. I am not going to chop you off, but if the statements are longer, the questioning is shorter. That may be to your advantage, but not to mine. [Laughter.]

Please proceed.

Ms. AULD. It is a pleasure to be here. You have long been a supporter of work force education and training, being instrumental in the Job Training Partnership Act, and following it through all these years, so we are pleased to be able to work with you to devise revisions in the training programs, and I think Vermont's successes can be a hallmark of what is yet to come.

I particularly would like to call attention to four guiding principles of the Human Resource and Investment Council. Those are, that we would look to create an educational training system around the demand and supply concept, so that where are the jobs and how do we back that up into training? And that is what we have done. I work with several work force investment boards, and we looked at the regions, identified the key demands, and then supplied the educational training programs to get workers to those jobs.

Customer focus, what is it the employers want? What information do we have to help people make right decisions?

The third, regional partnerships. We believe in a decentralized system, whereby a local region can make its own decisions about education and training programs with its own local providers to have a healthy, high-performance community.

We also believe that the public-private partnership and discussion is essential to forming education and training programs. For all too long, employers have been a bystander, and through the Human Resource Investment Council, the work force investment boards, those employers have been key participants.

Along with that, then, are the three methods by which we want to accomplish this. Previously we have talked about work force education and training programs have been an array of unconnected programs, agencies that function separately in a business community outside the decision-making areas. So the HRIC took three of these key concepts that are, we believe, important to the success.

One is integration, a cornerstone of the system, a set of programs and services for individuals and employers that are comprehensive and seamless, so Vermonters know where to turn for education and training, how today's programs relate to tomorrow's jobs and where there is minimal duplication of services.

Under that, there are two key points that have happened as a result of your leadership previously. One is the one-stop career centers. In Vermont, back as far as 1981, most Department of Labor programs were brought under what became the Department of Employment and Training. We have since added the Registered Apprenticeship Program, which I would put a little plug in, at the national level, needs some attention, because it is key to linking onto student apprenticeship. School To Work has been closely related with the Department of Labor work and educational training programs.

So there are twelve of these one-stop career resource centers around the State, and I know you visited the one in Burlington, and they are the broker of information around all career services, as well as a broker of training services, which we believe is a key concept. We are not in the training business, but a broker of training. So one-stop career centers are essential to integration.

System entry. Whether one enters a system through an institution of higher education or through a literacy training provider, all of the information about the system should be available at that doorstep at that institution, and we are working to make sure that happens. So again, integration of the programs make for a seamless system.

Collaboration. The HRIC felt the best way to achieve an integrated seamless system was through a collaborative process rather than a competitive one. Oftentimes, we have had competitive processes, and that just does not move anybody ahead, so we have really been very active in terms of forming collaborations. I will mention several here to show how the work of the HRIC has led to elements of systems, links of the system coming together.

Community College of Vermont, Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, Department of Employment and Training through the one-stop centers now have educational and occupational counseling and group work for CCV students as a part of one system, rather than having three distinct stopping points.

Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Employment and Training have formed a partnership. Handicapped accessible one-stops assistive technology grant has been used to make the one-stop career centers accessible to people with disabilities, creating one system for folks in vocational rehabilitation and other Vermonters, integrating both populations so they are not separate.

Department of Social Welfare contracts with DET, as well as VSEC, also with the Department of Education for basic literacy.

We see the linkage of higher ed institutions from vocational centers to youth apprenticeship, and to registered apprenticeships, so those links have come together.

WIBs and employers have a relational focus for determining employers needs and meeting those needs.

The third principle is accountability. The HRIC has composed a list of measures and indicators, ranging from gaining basic workplace skills, literacy skills, transitions from School To Work, to wage and productivity indicators.

So those three—integration, collaboration and accountability—are sort of the methods by which we are bringing the seamless system together. I look at it as sort of a change. We keep linking pieces of that chain together, until, eventually, we will have the whole system.

I do have advice for the committee. One is, ensure that the distribution of Federal resources is organized and distributed in such a way as to avoid duplication of services, poor planning, and cost inefficiencies. Let me share one example. A recent Department of Labor request for proposals related to helping the disabled find employment excluded Vermont's DET from applying. Only community-based organizations could apply, even though in Vermont DET and Vocational Rehabilitation have already established a statewide partnership to help those with disabilities find work. The result, instead of being an integrated seamless system, will be two competing systems for a client base. So there will always be contentions for funds, but any legislation must allow the State the discretion to fund the system they have created. We created a system, but any additional money will have to go into another system in the same State to do that. So I feel it is essential that, at the Federal level, either executively or through legislation, that this top piece be coordinated.

Further, another one is to coordinate education, labor and welfare reform initiatives to avoid setting up multiple service delivery systems. For many, many years, since 1934, the Department of Employment and Training has been the job placement job service for employment for the people of the State of Vermont. We have to be careful we don't set up three or four different systems all draining money, particularly in a small State.

So, again, I would look at the functions across the Federal Government and say, this is an employment function, therefore the core, the lead group on that ought to be the work force development agency, and in this way we can make it a seamless system.

What is happening is, at the Federal level, administratively, there are many, many silos, and then the message comes through legislation that when we get to the State and delivery system it should be a seamless system, yet we have to work very hard, all the people in this room are working toward collaboration, to make it a seamless system at the State level, but we have to deal with those multiple administrative and legislative silos that come down, so it makes our work even more difficult. And even in the face of that, I think we have been particularly successful.

So, again, I would ask that, through the Federal system, we look according to functions and assure that the legislative and the executive branches are working to make sure it is seamless at the top, so that it makes it easier for us when we get that. And a key here, as you well know, having been a supporter of the small states for a long time, is to allow for the unique nature of a State to design its own system.

And so, with that, I would thank you, and tell you that we have just come back from a conference out on the west coast. Our folks came back and said, "You know, Vermont is light years head of the rest of the country in terms of putting together an education and training system." And that is with your help previously, and we look forward to your help in the future.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for those optimistic words. But, as I said before—well, I won't say it again.

Ms. Kitchel?

Ms. KITCHEL. Thank you very much for the opportunity to attend.

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The CHAIRMAN. Would you bring the mike a little closer to you, please?

Ms. KITCHEL. Certainly.

I would like to kind of look at this issue maybe from a little bit different perspective. Working for human services, I think we represent probably the largest single consumer group of people who are utilizing work force development services. As Commissioner of the Department of Social Welfare, I really would like to address the critical connection between work force development programs and our efforts to advance welfare reform, which, in Vermont at this point, really we serve over 8,000 families, 8,000 to 10,000 families. And I think it is really an integral part of our success within human services, whether we are dealing with a person with disabilities returning to work, or an inmate who is returning to the community, or a welfare parent who is receiving services from a variety of places.

I am hoping that the work that you are doing should result in a more organized system. In some ways, I think it reminds me a bit of Minoan architecture that has been added onto, and it is sort of a bit haphazard at this point, and I think that now is an opportunity to really complete that continuum of services and the ability to respond to a very rapidly changing marketplace.

I hope, as you are looking at options and policy development, that the connections between work force development and the aims of other public delivery systems and programs, particularly welfare reform in my case, will be examined, and that there is agreement on key elements and the prospect that we can create a service delivery system with core components such as one-stop centers within a larger spectrum of services and systems choices.

We are trying to respond to a wide array of human service needs and we have a wide variety of people participating in our programs. We have people with no labor market attachment, with very minimal educational skills, as you've already talked about, and I think that one of the things that we need to do is, recognizing the demands that are being placed, that we have got to create a system that has a better sequencing and intensity of activities.

Really, an activity here and a delay in a period of time, particularly when we are dealing with time limits and limitations on the kinds of supports that are available to families, really make it a very critical connection. And I know that you are fully aware that the welfare reform legislation comes with very rigorous work requirements and combines very stiff fiscal. penalties, and I think that only adds to the pressure to make this all work.

I would also just like to raise the point or the realty that, even in the best of times, resources have never been sufficient to serve everyone, and, in some way, we need to make sure that the design and the goals of this replacement system address the needs of Americans who are severely economically disadvantaged and who, without the assistance of these government services, would not be competitive in the marketplace.

And I recognize that some of the people we serve can move forward without a great deal of services, but others will not. We have, I think, in human services what we talk about in health care, adverse selection, and that we have many, many adults who do not have a high school diploma or do not have the workplace skills, and how we allocate public resources, I think, is important.

As we move away from categorization, we still need to set priorities about our resources and to address the needs. We can work smarter, but we still need to make sure that the resources are there, otherwise, my concern is that we just create a new generation of cream, which is a commonly used term.

Vermont does have a strong tradition of working together. I am really happy to say that all of us at this table have been working very closely. I have been personally very pleased with the commitment to help us with the needs of the department and of the agency. We work very closely. The HRIC, I believe, is a very important structure to help us move forward with the goals of welfare reform and placement of a variety of disadvantaged Vermonters. We look to the Workforce Investment Boards as a local structure, really, to integrate and bring together all the needs. It reminds me of a quote of John Muir, "Everything is hitched to everything." And it is how we bring it together in an organized way and how we can take major systems and have them work in a complementary fashion.

I think we have done a lot of work here. I am really proud of it. I found it very personally rewarding. I hope that the new legislation that we have can help buttress and help us move forward so that we have the most efficient use of resources, but also clearly understood goals and outcomes, because that really is what should drive the system. I would agree with Chancellor Bunting that that does require establishing a locus of accountability which I would also support should be at the point of the governor's office.

Thank you very much. I am beyond my time, and I appreciate the opportunity.

The **CHAIRMAN**. Thank you very much. Excellent statement.

Mr. Secretary, Bill Shouldice, it is a pleasure to have you here.

Mr. **SHOULDICE**. Senator, it is good to be here. Thank you for inviting me, and thank for your leadership on this issue and many others that you know we have been working on both with your office here in Montpelier and in Washington, on Brownfield development and on some trade issues. Your leadership has been very valuable.

The Vermont economy is one that I think is fragile, but also has some real opportunities in it. We have taken some time, and I will leave you with a chart that simply says, "A System for Success." Vermont's economy in the 21st Century will really depend on how well we balance community values and business needs, and if we do that and do that well, I think we will not only build on the cache of the strong presence that the name Vermont has in the world marketplace, but we will also make sure that our kids and our grandchildren that follow us won't have foregone opportunities, they'll have the same opportunities that we had.

We have focused on three central issues in doing that. We have focused on work force as a major issue; we have focused on finance, and that includes the State's bond rating on down to the programs and how we fund them; and we have focused on infrastructure, specifically things such as rail, air, water, sewer and power, but also modernizing our corporate code to make sure companies can actually incorporate in Vermont and not always have to do so in Delaware.

We have also recognized that one of the things that Vermont has going for it is we have a 25 year lead on, potentially, the rest of the country on operating many of programs in what I am calling and many are calling a devolved environment. I saw that, in Oregon the other day, which has been known for years as being way ahead of the rest of company on economic development issues, has now decided to form regional development corporations, which, as you know, Senator, we did that 25 years ago, and some of them are over 50 years old.

But for the purposes of today's discussion let me stick to work force education and training and how we are doing here in the State of Vermont. Let me just say to you that, other than taxes and deregulation of the power industry, work force is the number one, one of the number one issues here in the State. And it ranges from workers' compensation being an issue, to labor quality, to, ultimately, education and training.

I believe that if we are to succeed, we need to change to meet the needs of the employers and to recognize that changes are takings place in the national and international marketplace. I would, as the three panelists ahead of me have advocated, that, to the extent we can make it simpler, easier to understand, take some of the strings that have been attached and create one central point of entry for the resources into the State of Vermont that, in a little State like Vermont with some 500,000 people strong, we could probably have better flexibility and actually get at accessing that marketplace a little bit easier.

We have two simple goals in Vermont, and that's to create jobs—and over the past 5 years we have created 30,000 jobs, "we" being the economy, not State government—and the second thing we have tried to do is to make sure that every Vermonter takes home more in their paycheck. And that has been a little bit more difficult to do. Vermonters, on average, have a 91 percent parity in what the Vermonter makes compared to the national economy, in terms of income, and about 15 percent difference in what we take home in wages versus the rest of the country.

So I think we have plenty of work left to do ahead of us. That trend line is some 15 years old. I think that, as my neighbor—I won't quote anybody besides good old Vermonters—and that was somebody who said to me, "If you always do what you always did, then you will always get what you always got." I would just submit to you that what we have been getting has not been satisfactory, and we need to really challenge some of those old paradigms and think about some new ones.

I submit we have four to-do's, Senator. One is, we need to help employers to work in teams. I think that is something that's sweeping the Nation. We need to look at that.

We need to help employees take advantage of technological advancements. Just because the employer has been working out of Bridgeport on a manual piece of equipment for 25 years and now the industry is calling for CNC technology, we need to help them. If we have any loyalties to anybody in this business, it should be to that person who has been helping Vermont compete for the past 25 years.

We need to understand that certification. No. 9,000 will determine how well Vermont products can enter foreign markets.

And, last, I think it will be the measure of this State and the value we put on human awareness and our capital is how well we help others, employees and individuals to transform from welfare to work.

So, I think, in a word, Senator, customized job training will be a key component of our ongoing economic success.

I thank you for the time you have given me, and I look forward to your continuing efforts in this area. Anything I can do, please call on me and I will be happy to.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Thank you all for excellent testimony.

I want to again emphasize that we do have a habit of comparing ourselves with the other states, but we have got to compare ourselves with the international global markets, and being better than all the other states still doesn't do it. And I want to keep concentrating on that aspect of it.

As a Nation, I know the Chancellor pointed out World War II and the GI bill. We all go back to that. At that time, that put us in a position where we spent 10 percent of the national resources on education. We now put about 2 percent. The President's great challenge which he has given will raise it one-half of a percent to 2½ percent. So we have a long ways to go in this country.

Now that can be made up, of course, by the states, but we all know the problems we are having right now on trying to figure out how to reform our law to just get back to the level that we had before the Vermont U.S. Supreme Court decision. So we have to make up for those loss of resources in extra effort, and that includes a much better cooperation with our business community, because, as I pointed out earlier, the European community replaces their national and local efforts with business effort by the tune of about $200 some-odd billion. So we have to look toward that solution and put more burden on our businesses, perhaps, to take a better interest in what goes on in K through 12, and especially the high school years.

But I just add that that effort, though, has to start down in the sixth grade, not in, necessarily, in the ninth or tenth grades. If we are going to make relevant the education to our kids, they have got to understand what the opportunities are, and they won't understand why they are in school unless they know what it will do for them.

We have now in this Nation, right now, 190,000 jobs in the educational technology area that are going begging because the level of skills of those graduating from high school are not ready to take those jobs on, and those are $20, $30, $40-an-hour jobs. And it is up to us in our State to get ahead of the country in making sure we have people ready to fill those jobs. If we do, our economy here can go just like this. And I tell you, there is nothing that makes a family happier then to know, if they do certain things, their kids are going to end up with a $20-an-hour job not a $6-an-hour job. They might even leave the house. [Laughter.] So there is great benefit to doing what we are trying to do here, and I appreciate your testimony.

I want to get down to the specifics of where I need your guidance on some of the legislation. During the consideration of the work force development in the last Congress, one of the most controversial issues was whether or not the local work force boards should be mandatory in local areas, and if they are mandatory, that there must be a certain number of various representatives on each board. Would each of you give your suggestions on how the Federal legislation should construct these boards, or if they should, and should they be mandatory, advisory, and who should determine who serves on them?

Mr. Chancellor?

Mr. BUNTING. I would be happy to kick it off.

The CHAIRMAN. I thought you were reaching for the mike.

Mr. BUNTING. No, I wasn't, but let me make a couple of points and then turn to my colleagues.

The CHAIRMAN. Right.

Mr. BUNTING. I think the exact membership should not be mandatory, but I think the criterion, or two, the criteria, for membership should be, and I would recommend the Vermont model, where we have, in our legislation, said that the voice of the workplace, employers and employees, should be predominant on those work force boards.

And so I think there is a lead focus that, absolutely, those boards need. At the same time, I am not sure that I would recommend that, in Washington, that that be laid out in exact terms. I think there ought to be some flexibility. I do think that all parts of the State should be covered by such regional boards. I do not think that, again, the exact division of geographic areas, or whatever, should be determined in Washington.

And last, sometimes when that question gets raised in Washington, they are talking about large states where the regional work force boards within a State will have predominance. Probably, in some respects, our entire State might be thought of as one work force region, when we think about some of the other states. And that brings me back to the earlier recommendation. Yes, we need regulational boards within Vermont; but we also need leadership from the top of the State so that we are thinking of our entire State of Vermont as one important interconnected entity, in and of itself.

The CHAIRMAN. Susan?

Ms. AULD. I would agree that they should not be mandatory, but I suspect, from what I know, that most states have work force investment boards, maybe by that not the latest names—in Massachusetts, they have had regional employment boards. The problem will become that, on comes the HRIC, on comes the Workforce Investment Board.

And I would put out a principle. Governor Dean has asked us to do is to consolidate boards, so if there is some way to encourage the consolidation. In Vermont, I would like to salute the technical schools in a couple of areas of the State, where they have consolidated their regional advisory boards into the Workforce Investment Board, because you have 51 percent employers, the regional advisory boards from the vocational technical schools need that employer input. So rather than having two councils, that there should be some mechanism to fold that in.

Also, compliments to the Adult Learning and the Department of Education, because they have now become a part of the Workforce Investment Boards, and has a subgroup of the Workforce Investment Board to deal with their issues. So we are looking at building the capacity of the Workforce Investment Board.

So in most states, there will be some employer boards, but the question is to look across, administratively and legislatively, to those boards that are currently created in Federal legislation and make those conform to the Workforce Investment Board, to have that kind of incentive, so you don't have multiple boards.

So, again, I would say, not mandate the boards, but encourage consolidation of employer boards. Membership should be clearly dominated by the private sector, and we are the input. We are facilitators, we public agencies are facilitators of the end goal, which is a job or education and training toward a job, and that demand side that needs to have the predominant voice.

So, again, I think I agree with Chuck on that. Give the criteria for the membership, but don't designate exactly who.

The CHAIRMAN. Secretary Shouldice?

Mr. SHOULDICE. Keeping my message clear and consistent, I go back to the chart that I am going to give you, Senator, when I conclude, and that is, I think the delivery system has to be in communities where people actually live and work, and I would wholeheartedly support a requirement of having such a board set up.

How it's set up—I am think, I am a little bit familiar with the State of Vermont, I think we believe in local control. I think, how they set them up to address their needs, I think is going to be different from county to county and from State to State. So I would encourage the flexibility, if you would, on how those are actually set up.

There was an article in the paper this Saturday or Sunday, I am not sure which day it was, that recognized President Clarke for his efforts in understanding that the private sector, with the help of government, in conjunction with education, will really determine how well we organize our efforts. And what I said in the paper, and I would like to just reiterate today, in the decade I have been working on economic investment, I have yet to be a part of a deal that originated on State Street that actually had the staying power it needed, that most of the good deals we put together start on Main Street, and to put those resources and have those boards meet on Main Street and work as a community to address their long-term problems, from K to 12 to Success by 6, to Votech, on up through, I think, is going to be important. I think the single greatest challenge that we have is to really focus the resources on the population age from age 25 to 65, when we know the average Vermonter is going to have to be retrained four to five times. So we need to keep that flexible and out there, but I think the dialogue that needs to take place in a board environment is going to be important.

The CHAIRMAN. I think your reference to "keep it local" presumes, though, that the locals understand the challenges that we face internationally, and where the lacking aspects are in our educational system and all, so first you have got to educate before you can presume that they will be best able to handle that. I think we all have to realize that.

Mr. SHOULDICE. I agree.

The CHAIRMAN. As it has been discussed, welfare reform is and will continue to put a strain on the resources available to vocational and adult education and job training funding. Other than additional funding, which is a given, what do we need to—"given" not that you are going to get it, but a given that it is important—what do we need to do at the Federal level to improve the education and training system so that it can serve all of those who need services? Ms. Kitchel?

Ms. KITCHEL. Well, I would like to go back to one of the points that Chancellor Bunting made, and that is, while we are talking about education and training, what is accountable within that legislation is very, very narrow, that it's only 12 months of vocational training after high school. And so if we really are concerned about participation on these postsecondary activities or very occupationally-specific activities, sometimes we have used, certainly, community college, some of the two-year programs, and yet those are not accountable.

So I think, at least part of what we, perhaps, have, when we were talking about, earlier, looking at what we have for policies that are already out there, how do they fit with what we think are key activities for work force development and how we put the two together, I think that we have to recognize that resources have always been insufficient, really, to carry forward this agenda.

What we have tried do is look at how we can best use the resources that are there, whether it is in CCV and using VSAC financing, looking at JTPA, and I think that's really the issue behind a lot of my testimony, is that these resources, historically and out into the future, are very critical to the success of those policies, and we need to make sure that we don't erode or redirect in such a way that it will divert those limited resources that would make getting those outcomes even more difficult, and that is why I was talking about outcomes and goals and making sure there is that clear connection, back to this national policy, around families, millions of families.

The CHAIRMAN. Chancellor?

Mr. BUNTING. May I just add one point there? I fully concur with Jane's comments on that, and it seems to me, also, that we ought to think about providing ways to provide incentives and support and reward for those welfare clients who start with their skills at an earlier level then postsecondary education. As she was indicating, we are now going to be faced with the major challenge of those welfare reformers who are not in the sort of creaming, those who have the highest skills.

Why shouldn't we put our money where our mouth is to the extent that we are supporting educational progress for those individuals, so that they may even continue, once receiving the GED or the equivalent of high school education, to then further their own direction and progress, the connection between work and school, that I think has to be a seamless connection, and I would hope this legislation might support and reinforce that basic philosophy.

The CHAIRMAN. I think that is an important point, especially with our level, where a GED is really not a very high level. The American Federation of Teachers put out a pamphlet not too long ago that compared our GED levels with the levels of other nations, and, wow, we are at a minimal level, whereas their level for their GEDs are so much higher than ours that it alerts us that we can't just anticipate that the GED is going to provide the skills necessary for welfare workers to get anything other than a minimum wage job. That is an excellent point.

Thank you very much. I know I can get a hold of you guys any time, so I will move on to the other panelists so we can get somewhere near on schedule. I deeply appreciate your testimony, and I know how hard you are all working, and it is a pleasure to work with you.

The CHAIRMAN. Our second panel will look at education programs. I would now like to have this panel move forward—if I could please have quiet.

Marcia Baker, Director of The Burlington Technical Center; Kathy Finck, Director of the Career Lifelong Learning of the Vermont Department of Education; Joyce Judy, Dean of Students at the Community College of Vermont; and William Laramee, Dean of Institutional Advancement at Lyndon State College, and currently the Chair Elect to the Vermont Adult Education Board; and Mary Leahy, Executive Team of Central Vermont Adult Basic Education.

STATEMENTS OF MARCIA BAKER, DIRECTOR, BURLINGTON TECHNICAL CENTER; KATHY FINCK, DIRECTOR OF CAREER AND LIFELONG LEARNING, VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; JOYCE JUDY, DEAN OF STUDENT SERVICES, COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF VERMONT; WILLIAM LARAMEE, DEAN OF INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT, LYNDON STATE COLLEGE, AND VICE-CHAIR AND CHAIR-ELECT, VERMONT ADULT EDUCATION BOARD; AND MARY LEAHY, EXECUTIVE TEAM OF CENTRAL VERMONT ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

The CHAIRMAN. Marcia, start them off.

Ms. BAKER. Thank you very much, Senator. And thank you for inviting me to come as a representative of the Technical Directors in Vermont.

The very good testimony that we have heard so far has mostly centered on adults, I believe, and although the technical centers do have a light portion of adults, I think it is very important to remember that it all starts at a much younger age. As you said, with the sixth grade, children have to be starting to think about what they are going to be doing.

And I think that what we have in Vermont as far as technical education is very good as far as it goes, but we also have to be thinking of restructuring the high schools so that the mission of the high schools becomes much more than just getting students into postsecondary baccalaureate programs.

As far as work force development legislation that we have had in the past, the Perkins I and Perkins II legislation have done much to give us the tools that we have needed to help many, many students, especially through its support to special educators that we are able to hire. Through this funding, we are able to assist disadvantaged and disabled students, as well as those who are not proficient in English. And I hope that you and the other senators realize how much that has really meant to us, because it enables us to help these students really succeed in their technical programs. Without that extra help, I doubt very much whether the 45 limited English-proficient students that we have at the Burlington Technical Center, or the 50 or 60 on IEPs, that is, with specific disabilities, or the many, many disadvantaged students, could go as in their programs as they are able to do with this help.

Over and above that, I think the single biggest aid that you have given technical education in the past 10 years has been in the form of Tech Prep legislation and funding. At the Burlington Technical Center, we have been the recipient of four major and continuing Tech Prep grants which have allowed us to create new, interesting and viable programs which link high school and postsecondary education in Two-Plus-Two programs that motivate students to continue their education after high school.

And I stress the word "motivation" because I think that's where it is. When you are talking about high school students, many, many students come to high school with a kind of a vague notion of what's going to happen there, and a lot of what happens there is social, and the learning is secondary. Unless they know that they are going to go on to UVM or to Harvard and they have very specific goals in mind, I think that what I see for the vast majority of high school students is that they don't have a very clear idea of where they are going to fit into the work world when they get out of school.

When I look at the Tech Prep students that we have at the Technical Center, I see a very sharpened sense of motivation, and I have invited a couple of parents and a couple of students, and they hope to be able to speak for a few minutes at the end about what their programs meant to them. But as we all know, the careers of the future are going to demand additional education. It is no longer enough to graduate from high school. You can't support a family decently on a high school education alone if you haven't taken specific training or if you don't intend to go on, because going on to a two-year school program like VTC is really a wonderful guarantee of your future, but just a high school education just doesn't do it any more.

If we are going to have the good workers and good citizens that we need in Vermont and in the country, we know very well that we are competing in a global marketplace. And I have had the privilege during the past year to travel to Germany to look at their apprenticeship program, and last summer to go to China to talk about their work force education, and they know, as you have said, this global marketplace, they know what students need, and we need to become much more aware. I think we know, but students need to know, parents need to know, guidance counselors and other educators need to know what should be accomplished in the future.

We have with us today some representatives from our careers and design and illustration program, and this is our newest Tech Prep program, which could not have gotten started without the

Tech Prep help we have gotten through the Perkins II legislation. So that is why it is so very important that we remember that we have a wide variety of young people in our schools, and I mentioned the limited English-proficient students, the ones that are on special programs, but also some very, very bright students who didn't have much of a direction before they came into our Tech Prep programs. Now they are learning specific things that have been provided to them by business advisory committees in each of those programs, so that these programs are just not created by educators, not at all. And part of the Tech Prep procedure is to have advisory program committees right from industry, and from postsecondary.

So this has been very, very successful. It is making a major difference in the lives of dozens of students in our center alone this year, in our new design program, as I said, in our aviation technology program—which you are very familiar with, Senator, because you have been very influential in helping us gain some tools that we couldn't have gotten without your help—our immediate production program. These are through with their Federal cycle of support, and now are self-supporting through tuition. Because all of our programs are elective, if the students don't elect them, they aren't there, yet all of these programs are booming. Indeed, in the new design program, there has been a waiting list in its second year of existence, and next year we are having to put students on a wait list.

All of our programs—we have a dozen of them at Burlington—have articulation agreements with postsecondary institutions, and this is the wave of the future, and also has come to us through the Perkins support we have gotten through Tech Prep. It has given us the direction that we need to prepare these young people by saying, if you take this program, you can earn up to twelve college credits, 9 college credits, depending on what program, or you can challenge an exam, and in so doing I think we raised the bar for these young people, who, in the past, didn't have any clear sense of direction, but now know they can receive advanced standing at VTC, at Champlain, at Lyndon State.

Indeed, in the program that I mentioned before, the aviation technology at Embry-Riddle Aeronautic University, twelve college credits. They are most of the way through their training for a certified and license program that will enable them to very, very well support their families. So I hope that any future legislation will keep in mind the success of Tech Prep.

And, as I said when I started, we need to have a wakeup call to the high schools, because I still work with academic teachers, and I was one, I was an English teacher, and I understand the training and education that we all had as academic teachers, and it didn't include very much of a connection with the workplace. But now, we have to educate the educators, if you will, to the nature of the workplace of the future.

And one of the programs that I have seen that really has great promise is the program that some of the high schools have started with the career pathways, so that high school students start, even in junior high school or middle school, start thinking about what they might be interested in. I know this is taken as a threat by some parents who think their children are too young to be thinking of what they are going to be doing in the future, but certainly they are not locked into saying, if you take this, then you have to go into medicine, or you have to go into business, but it is a concentration that gets back to my first point, which is that motivation is what is very, very important for young people.

And if they are motivated to come to school, first of all, to come to school, come on time, to take the appropriate math and science and other courses that are going to prepare them for what they think that they would like to do, then this can transfer over to something else if they change.

As you said, and as some of the other speakers have said, we have a tendency to change careers, to change directions, and we don't want to lock into only one job-specific training. But, at the same time, what I think we do at the secondary level in our technical centers, is education as opposed to training, and it gives our students a broad look at what the possibilities are, and that is just so very important.

I have looked at the testimony from the young man who gave testimony from Essex Technical Center, and I think it is just a attribute to the kinds of things that are possible with motivation, so that a student then sees what is the purpose of going to school.

The Federal funds that we get in Burlington are about 8 percent of our budget, which doesn't seem like a lot of money, but it is a very, very important portion of our funds, because this is where the new innovative programs are able to be started. We couldn't have started our design and illustration program without the thousands of dollars that we got that enabled us to get the top-of-the-line power Mac computers and the software, and the technical backing from our business has allowed us to continue it.

We can't do it alone. The Federal Government has been very, very helpful in helping us to do that, and I look forward to more of that kind of partnership with the Federal Government in the future.

Thank you for inviting me to come.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Marcia.

Kathy?

Ms. FINCK. Good morning, Senator. Thank you very much for allowing me to testify this morning.

I come from about 20 years in the field of vocational education as a vocational special needs teacher and an adult ed coordinator of a local center, and now Director of Technical and Adult Education at the State level, and the first thing I would caution you about is, would be to warn you about me. I am not a politician. I consider myself and educator, very task-oriented, so I may sometimes get myself in trouble for very straight talk.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I know the problem. [Laughter.]

Ms. FINCK. I think that there are basically four issues in Vermont that we really need your help with. Funding, governance, access and help with promoting an integrated statewide system.

Coming from the field as a practitioner, in terms of funding, we have funded programs in Vermont that serve right now about thirty percent of our eleventh and twelfth graders at the secondary level, and we serve about 4 percent of the adults who need technical education and training.

This is an educational system, and I would be the first to admit that it doesn't always work collaboratively with other systems, and sometimes, as I look around this room, I feel like we are preaching to the choir. The people that are sitting in this room are people who have worked very hard to collaborate. Technical centers in Vermont and adult technical education facilities, adult basic ed facilities have worked very hard with regional groups that give them advice about where we should be going with our programs.

I would caution about too much on the level of a local advisory board that would have the say about what a program, an education or training program, should be, simply because I have been there and worked with advisory committees they are very committed to filling the jobs that are in their businesses in the local and regional area, and the educational system's job is to look beyond the region and the State boundaries to what we do need internationally. So you need that tension in the system between education and other work force development providers. I think it is extremely important that we have a very large variety of providers, but I think that the tension in the system is an important aspect of what we need to maintain in any legislation that you support for us.

In Vermont, we can pay now or we can pay later. We spend $24,000 a year to maintain an adult in prison. We pay $15,000 a year for public assistance to a family of four. 42 percent of our ANFC recipients lack a high school diploma. 88 percent of teen mothers on ANFC lack a high school diploma.

These are very strong arguments for increased funding of, not only an education system, but of an education and training system in Vermont. What I would say to you is that we need lots of options for people to come in at different points in the system, lots of options for people to enter and exit after they have a skill, so that they can come back in and get additional skills.

In terms of funding issues in Vermont, our overall Federal support for technical education programs needs to be increased. The level of funds guaranteed to small rural states needs to be maintained. We need to have a minimum level of State funding for administration.

I was sitting here this morning trying to count up the actual number of people who work in the State Department of Education to support this broad system that we are trying to put together. I have twelve staff members. We are not just lean and mean, we are anorexic, Senator.

In each of the funding sections of the bill, language needs to call for collaborative funding amongst State agencies. I would go so far as to support the idea of earmarking funds that only could be used if they are used in a collaborative manner.

We need to maintain strong language in terms of support of School To Work and Tech Prep projects, including requirements for increased academic standards. We have long recognized, in technical education and adult education and training programs, that we need not only excellent technical skills but excellent academic skills. No question about it. We promote that. Again, we are preaching to the choir.

Thank you very much for your time.

The **Chairman**. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Joyce, please proceed.

Ms. **Judy**. Thank you.

I appreciate this opportunity to testify on the reauthorization bill for work force development. I want to highlight just a few points which, if addressed, might allow CCV and other organizations to work more effectively to deliver work force education and training to adults throughout Vermont.

It is important to note that CCV has established a number of collaborative relationships with institutions, agencies and businesses throughout Vermont which help to avoid duplication of services and expand the work force development opportunities for residents.

Here are some examples. CCV, the Department of Employment and Training, and the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, have developed a cooperative agreement linking the career services provided by DET and VSAC with the needs of 9,000 CCV students.

The Vermont State Colleges and the Department of Social Welfare have teamed up to provide educational services to participants in the Reach-up program. Nearly 500 of the 700 Reach-up participants are enrolled at CCV.

Last year, CCV, the Department of Employment and Training, and the Department of Social Welfare combined efforts and resources to launch the WEEEV (Work, Experience, Education, Employment for Vermonters) training program. During this six-month program, CCV provides the educational component, DET provides job placement and job site supervision, and DSW provides case workers and additional financial support.

CCV has also used Carl Perkins' funds to develop articulation agreements with several technical seniors in Vermont that help students transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

Despite these efforts, however, problems still remain which might be alleviated by new legislation.

First, we believe that a fundamental problem facing all of us here today is that there is still no statewide system for work force education and training, so that the cooperative arrangements I just mentioned are frequently dependent upon personalities or particular grants and are not system-driven. Consequently, more time is frequently spent on achieving and developing collaboration than on direct services; and beneath the surface of collaboration is concern for protection of scarce resources rather than for sharing and redistributing of those resources.

It should be noted that the Human Resource Investment Council and the network of work force Investment Boards are moving toward a more systemic design for work force education, but we have still not addressed organizational restructuring. An example of this situation is this particular panel, where we have CCV, Adult Education, and technical center personnel all testifying, but these organizations have no mandate to plan together to share recourses. Moreover, current Federal funding requirements are often a barrier to rethinking organization and the services we provide. We often find ourselves competing for the same funds or protecting funding patterns, rather than reorganizing the entire system.

Therefore, Federal legislation that concerns real incentives for systemic reform would be helpful.

Second, the Carl Perkins and TRIO Students Support Services grants have enhanced CCV's ability to expand career services and coordinate efforts with external agencies and institutions. Both these programs assist CCV in effectively preparing opportunities to enter the labor market for the first time, upgrading their skills, and/or assisting with a career change. However, due to the increased need for postsecondary education to provide high skills for people entering the labor market, we would also encourage the rethinking of how Perkins funds are distributed in Vermont. Currently, only 15 percent of Perkins dollars help support postsecondary education, while 85 percent of Perkins dollars goes to the secondary level. We believe that not only the distribution of the Perkins funds but the decision making regarding this distribution ought to be reexamined, since currently it resides with the State Board of Education, where postsecondary interests are not well represented.

Given these concerns, we would encourage a change in the decision making process that distributes Perkins dollars and urge a 50-50 ratio between secondary and postsecondary program.

Third, we would be opposed to the introduction of a voucher system for adults seeking training and education prior to the development of a much more integrated and efficient system of work force education and training. While a voucher system is an appropriate way to empower consumers, we fear that in the current situation vouchers might only increase competition and duplication of services rather than promote the integration which we are moving toward with HRIC and the WIBs.

Moreover, vouchers by themselves cannot assure that individuals will receive the training that is most useful to them in the long run, versus that which is most convenient or marketed most effectively in the short term. A balance must be achieved between the goals of empowering individual consumers and development of programs seeking to meet the long-term needs of the Vermont work force.

Therefore, we caution against any move toward a voucher system prior to the clear organizational development of Vermont's work force education system. We would, however, encourage Federal funding for job training programs that require full partnerships between employers and educational providers.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Joyce.

William?

Mr. LARAMEE. It might be helpful if I just ditto her report. You won't have to hit the green light or even the red light here. That was excellent.

Senator as Vice Chair and soon to be Chair of the Vermont Adult Education Board, I have been asked to comment on the work of that board, with specific emphasis on its 5 year strategic plan.

The Adult Education Board has authority for policy and advocacy responsibility for the Department of Education Adult Education programs, which include Adult Basic Ed, GED, Adult Diploma, Vocational Technical Education.

As important as adult literacy is to the economic and social well-being of the State and Nation, it is often the stepchild of education reform, suffering in definition, in structure and, as you heard, in funding. Few states, in fact, have given serious resources or demonstrated daring and creative thought to the task of upgrading the functional literacy of its adult citizens or to building connections among agencies serving adult learners. I think Vermont is close to being an exception. We still have a ways to go however.

The "Cornerstone Report," which I have left on your table, for the adult education system which the State Board of Education adopted in February of 1996 is Vermont's attempt to be creative and daring; some would say too creative and daring, and others would say not enough daringness or creativity. But the report is an attempt to address the educational needs of Vermont adults who have not attained secondary school completion skills, and adults who may have a high school or even a college degree but need technical skills or occupational changes.

I would like to briefly list some of the major goals of the "Cornerstone Report," and share one of its key elements, an element which speaks most directly to the Federal legislation as it attempts to define a structure for work force education and funding formulas.

Some of the primary goals of the Adult Education Board report, and hopefully of any Federal legislation, are to first, create greater access to a more comprehensive range of educational services, available consistently and equitably across the State.

Second, achieve greater skill competencies for adult learners.

Third, allow for students to follow a cohesive learning path across providers that leads to nondegree credentials, valued and respected both by the learner, the employers and the community.

And, fourth, to provide a system for any legislation that may strengthen, unify or make more efficient the capacity of adult education.

We have a number of key elements in the plan. Let me just share one that I think, again, speaks most directly to the ways that Federal legislation can be of help to us. One key element is building interagency partnerships, a theme that you have heard a lot about this morning already, that link adult education to public policy and support collaborative funding for adult education.

With this as a brief overview of a multipage report, let me focus on what I would suggest for newly crafted Federal legislation, in part. I also want to say, as a caveat, this is really thinking out loud. I don't pretend to be an expert like some of these others on this issue. We are a lay board, attempting to do work in this area. But this is some of my thinking out loud in terms of Federal legislation.

First, consolidate separate programs into a unified system by establishing real block grants with as limited a number of special set-asides as possible.

Second, direct a large portion of the categorical funds to well articulated collaborative projects. Such a foe would at least push the different players to work together and share resources.

Third, require a single State plan regarding our work force training system that would provide a structure for all the different agencies to coordinate and to collaborate. The Adult Education

Board is attempting to move in such a direction, and might benefit from some Federal support to encourage or expect job training programs to join ranks with the adult education program.

Fourth, address the gap between the level of need and available resources. This might be done by requiring other appropriations, such as welfare, corrections, employment, economic development, to allocate a certain percentage of their moneys for educating adults.

Fifth, eliminate special categorical populations in the legislation to help integrate the system and eliminate fragmentation and duplication.

Sixth, divide work force education dollars into secondary moneys and adult postsecondary moneys, rather than the current split of vocational/technical education moneys and adult education moneys. The same pool of money may still end up in technical education centers, but the focus, however, would change from one of seeing adults as add-ons to an already overtaxed system, to a system of full acceptance and integration.

And, seventh, legislation must recognize that work force development is only one of the many needs of adult students. Also needed are skills to succeed as a parent, as a citizen, as a lifelong learner, as a recreator, and many others.

In closing, I want to stress that to simply carry the former categorical requirements forward into a block grant will not substantially improve work force education. We must require cross-agency planning and collaboration defined at the State level. The Federal Government should tightly control the goal of integration, and leave lots of latitude for the states to identify methodology.

Thank you for your time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mary?

Ms. LEAHY. Thank you, Senator Jeffords, for holding the hearing and for inviting the commentary on work force development from your fellow Vermonters. I am pleased to have this particular opportunity to express my appreciation to you for your interest, your leadership, and your accessibility in the recognition of the crucial importance of adult education in the health of American communities and the fulfillment of individual lives.

I represent Central Vermont Adult Basic Education, Inc., a private, nonprofit organization providing free literacy instruction, English as a second language, and basic education programs to nearly 900 men, woman and out-of-school youth each year. For over 30 years, we have served Vermont's central region of Washington, Lamoille and Orange counties.

We operate with a budget that combines funds from an annually proposed contract with the Vermont Department of Education, which this year includes $406,000 in State funds and $96,000 in Federal funds. In addition, our budget this year includes $26,000 raised in town meeting appropriations, and $200,000 raised from the private sector. Fundraising has become increasingly necessary for us as the appeal for our services has far outstripped the allocation of public funds to support the range of outreach and quality instruction required today.

As important as this effort has been is CVABE's development of a major volunteer program. In fact, community participation has been the central tenet in our strategy to make the goal of full literacy a realty. Since incorporating as a private nonprofit entity 5 years ago, our volunteer ranks have swelled to over 400 individuals coming into the program each year. Many of these volunteers are tutoring students in the program; others help to design and carry through plans to reach the very hardest to reach among those eligible for adult basic education services.

What may be unique to Central Vermont Adult Basic Ed is the centrality of this volunteer program to our service offering. It is not auxiliary help. Each volunteer in CVABE is a member of a community team for literacy, and within that team, thinks beyond the present assignment, to the achievement of full literacy in his or her community. The literacy team, in fact, serves as the means by which communities of Central Vermont can take major responsibility and design their own pathways to a fully literate society.

One member of a Community Team for Literacy here in Orange County is John Bellefeuille, who is with me today, and I would just like to introduce him. John is a volunteer tutor, often working with more than one adult student at a time. He is a trustee of Washington Electric Cooperative, a zoning administrator for his home town of Chelsea, the county seat, and the health officer of that town. As a leading light in his community, when we speaks of the importance of lifelong learning for everyone, people listen. And that is exactly what we have in mind when we ask our neighbors to be so integrally involved in this work.

But it is exactly the spirit of citizen action which seems vulnerable to me in the movement toward agency consolidation, as I understand it to be. The power of real community participation and dedication to literacy that can be mobilized most effectively by a community-based organization should be recognized as having unparalleled value. It isn't quaint; it isn't just possible in small town America; and it does take some doing. But on behalf of my colleagues, both on staff and in the volunteer cadre, on behalf of the hundreds of students benefiting from communities hospitable to their efforts, I urge you to consider supporting and replicating creative programs such as ours, whose first response is to the individual adult learner as neighbor, rather than to a client in an agency dominated system.

Once again, I thank you, Senator Jeffords, for providing this opportunity to tell you about the work I care very deeply about.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mary, and I commend you for your work. We have you here testifying because we know of your success, but also the importance of programs like yours to fit in the total structure we are examining. Thank you very much. I am a great believer and admirer of the program.

I want to give you an idea, and also for those that are here, a piece of information. Recently, Malaysia came over and examined our training programs to find out whether they were really working. They took a look at Tech Prep, went back, and, almost overnight, implemented it throughout Malaysia.

That gives you a look at the competition, and also how easy it is for them, when they have that kind of a structure, that they can go back and just say, "We are going to have it," and everybody has it. We have to go about from town to town, there is a hundred and some odd thousand schools, and try to convince them one by one. So that is the competition out there. We ought to recognize it and understand.

This panel has just been fantastic. It almost leaves me questionless, but not quite. I just want to say that what you have outlined and your thoughts just couldn't be stated better, and I deeply appreciate it.

The major problem in passing this legislation last year was that many of the national education organizations were opposed to the concept of having strong coordination between adult and vocational education and the training programs, although every study indicates that coordination is essential if we are to improve our work force development system. What are your suggestions as to how the Federal Government can encourage stronger coordination through that legislation? It has been such great statements from all of you, but I still would like you to emphasize and comment on that, please.

Ms. Finck. I think that it speaks to the tension in our own system, Senator, that our national education associations may be opposed to such a thing, when we, in technical and adult education, believe very strongly that that collaboration is very necessary.

One of the things I have come to understand over about the last two or 3 months since I have taken a position in the department is that we are still a very small constituency within the total education system, and there needs to be some collaboration at both the Federal and State level to bring this message, and to bring the weight of this message to elementary and secondary education.

I do believe our new Commissioner, Marc Hull, believes very strongly in the work force education system as a very strong component of the total education system. He and the State board are taking a look at our standards in Vermont and taking a look at the component that addresses work force education. There is a very strong commitment, but there is still some nay-sayers out there who don't believe that the word work is a good idea as part of your education system, and we really need to reinforce that throughout our education system, not just this one component of it.

The Chairman. Joyce?

Go ahead, Marcia.

Ms. Baker. Just to add to what Kathy said, I was told by a guidance counselor recently that, as far as some of the parents in her host high school, "career" was a dirty word. And my concern is that the decisions are made by people who don't know what it is that we are doing, and they have a view of work force education as it existed maybe 25 years ago. And so I urge people who don't know what is happening in the schools now to get into the schools and see, and I think that it is really, that people mean well, but they want the best for their children, and they don't know what the opportunities are, so I am always inviting people to go in to see what work force education is all about now, not what they think it is about.

The Chairman. Joyce?

Ms. Judy. I just have a quick response to that. I think if in any way that there can be legislation wording crafted that just insists or expects there will be collaboration among educational providers, Federal agencies and businesses, I think that there has to be some Federal incentives tied to that expectation before we are really going to see any major changes. And so I think that, going back to one of the recommendations, if we can provide some real incentives, and I oftentimes attach dollars to the real incentives. If we are going to have real systemic reform, it needs to start with some legislation that there is an expectation of collaboration and cooperation.

The CHAIRMAN. Bill?

Mr. LARAMEE. A quick response. I think, when the Senator speaks and the governor speaks and when money speaks, people act. And it seems to me the opportunity here is to speak clearly about the structure you desire and to put the money where your mouth is, and it will happen. Simple, but I think it works.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. That is what I expected from you.

Ms. LEAHY. Certainly I don't disagree with that, but I think, again, in the spirit of people from communities being involved, I think that it behooves all of us, we have spoken about agencies and educational institutions, but to make it possible in every way for people in the communities to become involved in the planning. Not to have these collaborative meetings which we have always had, but now there seems to be a particular—they are required. But to not have them in the afternoon, when other people in town are at their jobs, to have them in the evening, to have them on Saturdays, to make avenues very clearly open to people becoming involved, and I think, from a Federal point of view, the words, the invitation, the constant invitation for people to become involved, it is that—at that point that education becomes relevant.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I would like to hear your thoughts as to the impact of the local Workforce Investment Boards and State Human Resource Investment Council on delivery of your educational programs.

Who wants to start with that one? Will?

Mr. LARAMEE. A comment in terms of familiarizing you with the structure. The Vermont Adult Education Board has Adult Education Councils that are part of the Workforce Investment Boards, and they are a subgroup, or may be seamless, actually, in terms of as you watch the boards work. But the intent of the Vermont Education Board is to have these Council review education plans within regions, and then to direct the board in terms of funding formulas for supporting those plans, so we are directing, inspecting regional planning and will—we will put our money where our mouth is.

The CHAIRMAN. Marcia?

Ms. BAKER. As a member of the WIB in Chittenden County, I can say we have a very interesting group that works together in planning. It is a relatively new group and things take time, but one of the major thrusts has been to look at manufacturing technology, because, in Chittenden County, there are many manufacturers, and in order to provide the background for students or workers to be retrained, some of the adult educators in town have worked very hard to come up with new curriculum materials, and they are just creating a fantastic curriculum which will help manufacturing technology to train, retrain their workers, and also other adults.

So yes, we are working. It takes time, and having a majority of business people certainly is a lesson to those of us in education who get together and have meetings and talk and talk and talk, and people from business just aren't going to do that. So unless the meetings are very interesting and appropriate, then they don't come. So it really keeps us on our toes, and it has been a pleasure to be a part of that burgeoning work force board in Chittenden County.

The CHAIRMAN. Kathy?

Ms. FINCK. I think one of the things Marcia said was, it is relatively new, and therefore one of the things that I hear a lot throughout the State is that we need to be very careful about adding additional structures. We now have, I mean since 1989, I think, when we had in place very effective regional advisory boards for technical centers, I wish we had done something that had utilized that structure and brought it together with additional members to create regional WIBs.

Instead, what we did was we added another new structure, and every new structure that comes along says, okay, all the rest of you who have been out there—and some of them been there, as Bill Shouldice says, 30, 50, 60, 70 years—OK, now all you folks who have been out there forever, and maybe even have some very effective organizational structures, we think it is time for you to join a new structure. One thing I would urge you not to do is add any more.

We have enough structures in Vermont and elsewhere. What we really need to do is figure out which ones are most effective and efficient and figure out how to make those work. Every time we add a new board, what I like to say about these advisory boards is that they are just that. They can be politely ignored. It is important that, if we are going to set up a structure that's regional and that is advisory, that it be like the regional advisory boards for technical centers that have a legal structure for giving input to the system. Some people feel that they don't have enough to say about what that system should be, but what we have done is set up a structure where these are absolutely advisory committees that have no legal advice or actually can be politely ignored.

The CHAIRMAN. Joyce?

Ms. JUDY. I support what Kathy has to say. I think, one step further, that the HRIC and the WIBs have the potential, provide the potential framework for a statewide organization. It will be interesting to see what really does happen in the next 6 months to 2 years with developing that potential. But I agree with Kathy, I think that there are too many boards, and we need to figure out how we can consolidate and cooperate with those boards.

The CHAIRMAN. Mary?

Ms. LEAHY. My concern is also similar to what Kathy has expressed. The numbers of existing groups that have cooperated and collaborated and coordinated for a long time are being urged to subsume under a new rash of board possibilities. My concern is the amount of money this is costing, in addition to everything else, because of a new structure being put on top of what is existing, without, sometimes, the recognition of what has been there before, what is operating well, and the need to manage yet another structure and what this cost might be.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you all. Very, very excellent testimony. I tell you, it is just great to come here and get the straight word. Thank you.

Our third panel will discuss training programs, and I would now like to have the third panel step forward.

William Cormany, Senior Policy Advisor for the Vermont Department of Employment and Training; Steven Gold, Director of Welfare to Work at the Vermont Department of Social Welfare; and Joseph Paskevich, owner of Mahoney Hardware and 1996 Recipient of the Governor's Award for Excellence in Employment and Training.

STATEMENTS OF WILLIAM CORMANY, SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR, VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING; STEVEN GOLD, DIRECTOR, WELFARE TO WORK PROGRAMS, VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE; JOSEPH PASKEVICH, OWNER, MAHONEY HARDWARE, AND 1996 RECIPIENT OF THE GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Cormany, why don't you proceed?

Mr. CORMANY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the opportunity to testify today regarding the job training system in Vermont. The purpose of job training legislation, in part, is to ensure that the U.S. remains competitive economically and to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to participate in our economic system.

To achieve this goal, we must have a job training system that is cost-efficient, integrated and accessible.

To build such a system, I believe, the Federal legislation can provide the framework of the environment in which states can succeed.

There are a number of key elements critical to a successful system where legislation can play a role. I would like to comment on six of these key elements.

The first is governance. Localizing the system is a valid issue that deserves good debate. However, certain issues surrounding localization merit close scrutiny, especially those relating to small states. The governor of every State is elected by the people, and at that end must have the latitude to develop social and economic policy. In the small State of Vermont, that cannot be done with multiple administrative districts; in California, it can and should be done. In Vermont, it would prove cost inefficient, increase rather than decrease the politicizing of the system, and make it impossible to establish coherent statewide policy. The population of Vermont fits into a few square miles of Los Angeles, New York or Chicago, yet spans the gamut of urban, rural and suburban environments. To deal with this, Vermont is establishing a "small state" system centered on coordination and cooperation whereby advice is offered to the Human Resource Investment Council from regional Workforce Investment Boards and from the HVIC to the Governor and the General Assembly. This is a new system and it is working.

Mandating something different would go against the thoughtful process that has gone into developing this system.

The second key element is funding. This is a complex issue, but I think there are two indisputable facts. One, allocations for funding job training programs continues to fall in relation to inflation; and two, the need for training is increasing. Not only is welfare reform placing new pressures to provide training, but we are also moving from an era where a solid middle class lifestyle could result from a high school education, and where training beyond high school is imperative even for marginal success. Additionally, we are living in an economic environment where lifelong learning and lifelong job training are the critical criteria for ongoing successful participation in our society.

To compound the loss of funding coupled with increasing needs, small states find themselves at a unique disadvantage in trying to provide even basic services. The era of technology provides a perfect example. Vermont's population, as I said before, fits into a small portion of New York City. Yet to serve our population, whether through one-stop career centers or wiring for computer access, the costs to Vermont are vast different from that small section of New York. To provide for more equitable service delivery, the base State minimum allocations must be increased for small states.

The third key element, one-stop career center systems. This concept spans two administrations, and has broad bipartisan support in Congress. It should be maintained at minimum and expanded dramatically at best. It must be the focal point for individuals and employers who seek information and services relating to the labor market, including job training. This concept is the foundation for the kind of program consolidation and customer service you are seeking in legislation. By definition, one-stop career center systems forces integration of programs, coordination of services, and develops a focal point for citizens in need of job or training information and services. So I urge you, through legislation, to encourage coordination and integration around one-step career centers nationwide. Whether I am a dislocated worker, whether I am moving from School To Work, whether I am a single parent moving from welfare to work, I need a focal point for job and training information and services.

The fourth key element, performance measurements. We are operating in a new environment, where customer needs rather than program needs dictate action. Performance measurements must reflect this shift. We are presently operating under measurements designed for the old, fragmented program-oriented system, where customer needs were secondary. With the emphasis on self-service, user-friendly information and customer choice, the states must be allowed to design performance measures within the context of broad Federal benchmarks. This includes serving targeted populations, whether dislocated workers, disadvantaged adults, veterans, disabled and so on. States must be allowed to respond to social need rather than program mandate.

Information, the fifth key element. The information will continue to be part of the foundation of any job training system. While in the past staff have been called upon to interpret labor market and occupational information for customers, the very important work of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and their State counterparts have enabled states to develop and distribute meaningful user-friendly information about jobs, wages, employers, training facilities, occupational projections, and so on.

This facet of the system has immeasurable benefits, from helping individuals to make the right career and training decisions to helping them return to work quickly. It allows agencies to respond to the demand side of the economy more rapidly and helps avoid spending public dollars on occupations where there is no demand, and it helps employers make informed business decisions based on comprehensive economic data. Support for this system, or this particular element, will be crucial in the coming years.

Last key element, vouchers. There are compelling reasons to look closely at a voucher system for individuals to access training. We do it now on a small scale within the JTPA programs. A more formal system should be experimented with through pilot projects, as it would enhance the concept of customer focus. However, inherent in the voucher system is the distinct possibilities of cost inefficiencies and imprudent use of public dollars. To help alleviate these possibilities, the voucher system must be run through the one-stop career system where counseling and assessment services, labor market and occupational information and training provider information is available to all customers. This will heighten the possibility that good, informed decisions are made by customers as they make critical decisions on how to get training, in what field to get training, and where to get training. Vouchers can be an empowering tool in the hands of well informed individuals.

To conclude, while cost-efficiency provides one good rationale to develop a new training system, it follows that it would not be cost-efficient to establish multiple work force service delivery systems. Again, whether one is moving from job to job, School To Work, welfare to work, we must guard against multiple systems investment. We cannot afford it, nor will it serve customers well.

Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Steven?

Mr. GOLD. Thank you, Senator, for providing me with the opportunity to testify this morning.

As the Vermont Department of Social Welfare's Director of the Reach Up Program and Welfare To Work Programs, I have been very involved with welfare reform implementation in Vermont over the past several years. Our Vermont Welfare To Work Program is focused on assisting parents who are receiving cash assistance to become self-sufficient through employment. The Federal resources for work force development are essential to our effort, to our mission, because they provide, really, the major resource for education and training of our participants in preparing them to obtain and maintain employment.

You have heard from many others here today concerning the progress we have made in Vermont in developing positive collaborative partnerships in assisting Vermont welfare recipients to access and be supported in the services and education and training programs they need to move forward to employment. There is no question that, without the commitment to and actualization of the process of working together, sharing resources, and structuring our service delivery system based on using the strengths of the cooperating agencies to serve the best interest of participants, our participants would not be making the positive progress that they have achieved to date. As an example, single parents in Vermont who have reached the time limit that leads to a work requirement for the first 2 months that such a requirement was met, in February and March of this year, 72 percent are either meeting their work requirement or cases have been closed, the majority of those case closures due to earnings. This is not a hundred percent however, and I want to come back to that point later on.

The collaboration, positive as it has been, has nonetheless been accomplished in some very real sense in spite of the current plethora of categorically-funded education and training programs with multiple and divergent eligibility criteria, reporting requirements and limited flexibility and gaps in education and training services. I want to take this opportunity to strongly endorse Federal legislation that would promote the generation on the State and regional levels of a comprehensive and integrated system of work force education and training. The elimination of the multiple categorical programs with their overly burdensome regulations that have proliferated over the years, into a more streamlined approach that provides states with the flexibility to design and control a responsive and coherent system of work force development, including performance measures specific to each State, will be a major step in the right direction.

Having said this, I will speak to two specific areas. One, that any new Federal work force development legislation recognize and require a distribution of resources within a comprehensive system that directly addresses the needs of that significant group of welfare recipients for whom entry into the work force is an enormous change, requiring education and training in the most basic skill areas; and two, that the funding mechanisms defined in the new Federal legislation provide for at least a transitional period of a balanced approach of baseline funding program and consumer-driven funding.

Regarding the first issue, while it is clearly necessary to end the categorical "silo" approach to funding that has so long dominated the Federal process, the commitment to meet the needs of those special constituencies that that approach has addressed must be confronted responsibility. In particular, within the realm that I deal with on a daily basis, I am concerned with the needs of many welfare parents who are being required to move from welfare to work for the first time in their lives, and sometimes in the lives of several generations. For a significant number of this group, this is a huge and frightening change. Nothing in their life experience has prepared them for this, and yet, we are finding that, in spite of their fear and uncertainty, they are willing to change. In order to do that, however, we are also finding that these parents need intensive training in many basic life and work skill areas most of us take for granted—getting up on time for work, dressing appropriately for work, showing up on time for work, working in a group, understanding and accepting supervision, as well as basic literacy skills. The comprehensive system we need will provide this level of training, and also link these parents with higher level education and training once they have moved through this basic level. If we are to be successful with welfare reform in Vermont and across the Nation, we must have a comprehensive and integrated work force development system that provides the resources to address the needs of this group, along with the higher level needs of other unemployed, underemployed and displaced workers.

Concerning the second issue, it is clear to me that, in order to preserve and build on the many strong and successful program models that have developed in the current work force, education and training environment, especially in the nonprofit arena, whatever funding mechanisms are developed in the new Federal legislation will need to recognize that programs will require a basic level of direct funding in order to develop and/or maintain their basic program infrastructure and capacity. I am particularly concerned that, in the movement toward customer-driven funding, such as voucher systems, the viability of many effective programs, which are not capitalized through endowments as private postsecondary institutions are, or through State funds as public postsecondary institutions are, will be seriously jeopardized. Therefore I want to advocate for a funding structure that enables states to provide funds to support basic program capacity, combined with customer-directed funding that insures that programs respond to the needs of customers. I want to make sure that I am not advocating for the blind continuation of existing programs, or grandfathering of current programs. Indeed, I would propose that states be required to use a request for proposal process to determine the recipients of program capacity development or maintenance funding, thereby providing a means for insuring high-quality, effective and responsive programs.

I want to close by reiterating my strong support for new Federal work force development legislation that will provide states with the means to develop flexible, responsive, comprehensive and integrated work force education and training systems.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Joseph, first I want to commend you for your award.

Mr. PASKEVICH. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. And I am awaiting your testimony with great anticipation. Please proceed to tell us how to do it.

Mr. PASKEVICH. Thank you, Senator, and good morning.

First, I would like to thank for allowing me to speak today. It is an honor. It is not an honor I am sure I deserve, but thanks.

I want to start out by saying that my hardware store, over the past 7 years, has worked closely with the Education for Youth Partnership, funded through the Federal JTPA program. In that time, my company has extended training jobs to six young people, and without this important program, this experience would not have been possible.

As an employer, I know there is a critical need to bring youth into the work force prepared with at least the basic skills to compete and succeed. Yet without actual experience, today's youth simply do not get the insights of the employer-employee relationship, the expectations of the workplace, or the skills needed as a team player. This program, to me, bridges that classroom to the real world experience.

I just would like to step aside from my prepared speech here and say that, the part about the employer-employee relationship, that is the biggest challenge I have faced, along with the shyness of these students coming in. You get absolutely no respect when they come into your store. They come to you with attitudes that I think have come down from their—I hope I am not stepping out of place, but from their families. And they just hang out in my store, and I have to convince them to get to work. There are things they have to do. They have to show up for work on time, they have do things with direction, and can't just do it at their own speed and pace.

And it has worked. Most of the students have progressed to the fact that they understand that I am their boss. If I ask them do something, they have to do it. If they don't, it is not like skipping a class. They actually can be punished beyond staying after for detention; they actually might lose their job and the hourly wage they are getting, which helps support their afternoon activities.

So, moving on, I strongly suggest this funding for the youth program continues. My company is small, and I simply couldn't afford to bring these kids in and pay them to stand around, at first. What I do do, though, is I let them job-shadow my full-time employees, and they stick right in their back pocket and go with them throughout the day working in a hardware store. This shadowing helped teach the skills and techniques of working successfully with customers and to teach patience, which, if anybody has been in retail, is a must. You just have to have patience with customers or you lose them.

Each student also had the opportunity to learn the technical skills as well. And in a hardware business, that is no easy task. And I speak from experience, because I went into my store, as an owner, not knowing the first thing about it, and it took a long time to learn what each widget did. But the knowledge they have gained from being there, with the electrical, plumbing, paint, gardening, and that type of products, that alone will open doors for them in the future, just the basic knowledge of being alive, having a home, and whatever. These things can be learned in my type of environment.

I had one of my students, Joshua McNight, write a little letter. He is probably my A student. He came into the store as a shy 14- or 15-year-old. I have since hired him as an employee. He is a senior in high school this year, at Winooski High School. I would like to read his letter.

"My name is Joshua McNight. I got involved with the School To Work Program about 3 years ago. When I first got into the program, I was a sophomore, not doing well in school, dreading to go, and making the worst of the situation. I had no real ambitions or real desires. Since I have been involved in the program, I am doing well. I am on the honor roll, and the high school has recognized my efforts by making me Student of the Month. I have decided to go to college and pursue a career in music. I have not met a person who has not benefited from this program in one way or another. Cutting the funding for this program is comparable to cutting off the youth from self benefits."

When Josh stepped in, he had an attitude. He was just like all the rest. And the local police department knew him by his first name. I had customers come to me and question my sense of—let's see; what do I want to say—common sense, of hiring someone like this.

But this young man now has moved up the ladder. He takes my deposits to the bank. He has keys to the store. He cashes my daily sales up. And I am not disappointed for him that he is going to college, but I am going to lose a good employee I have brought in from day one. Now, I would like to keep him, but I know retail hardware business isn't the best place to be, even if you are the owner, right now.

So I guess it is obvious what Josh got out of the program. What is not so obvious is what the community, our State, and our Nation can get out of these kinds of programs. I feel there is a definite advantage to these kinds of programs. There is a growing complexity to entering the job market. It is no longer acceptable to just to show up and be able to lift boxes and work a cash register. That is what these students think, they can come in and stand there. If somebody asks them for it, go get it. That type of thing. It is not like that anymore. There are so many diverse things out there, and so many people nowadays are doing it themselves, that they have to—I mean, as an employee of the store, they have to help this consumer figure out what is wrong with whatever they are coming in with. Most people don't know what they have a problem with, and we have to help fix it.

The transition from school experience to work is increasingly demanding and is not being dealt with to the degree it should. Young people who cannot or choose not to attend institutions of higher education are being left behind with no transitional experience. I think the schools and vocational centers are addressing the problem, and that is why I serve on a local School To Work advisory council. But much more needs to be done.

Funding for youth training is imperative. Most of the young people with whom I work will not go on to college. Josh was, so far, the exception. Most will attempt to successfully enter the job market and many will fail. I don't believe any should. On-the-job training programs will help many of these young people, and I know my community will be better off as a result. At least mine has benefited from the programs just by getting Josh off the streets.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

That is incredibly valuable testimony in this sense. I sit on the National Directors of Jobs for American Graduates. And I have told the rest of the directors that this program ought to be successful and it ought to be successful quickly and then not be needed. I say that because 50 percent of the people that leave our high schools, at best, are going on to college. 25 percent, or half of those, will drop out before they get a degree. so that means 75 percent of our young people really need education in the basics of a job, as well as getting the skilled training.

But the main thing the educational community has to recognize is that their primary consumer is business and jobs, and they must know the basics. I remember testimony in what I think was the

Goals Panel that I held here in Vermont, and one of the employers said, "Really, whether they know how to read or do arithmetic is probably not as important to me as that they know enough to pull the stem out of their alarm clock and come to work on time." That is kind of a sad condemnation of where we are, but it is true.

We have to accept those kinds of responsibilities in the school system. And the Vermont graduates, they have the astounding record as far as being able to show, as a result of their program, people got jobs. And it was pulling the stem out on the alarm clock, not coming to the job with your hair up in curlers or your dungarees on, and knowing how to smile and how to greet people. Those are relatively simple, basic tools, but that shows how far we have to distance ourselves from the expectation of who the primary consumer of education is, from that perspective, and when our community business people ask for certificates and ask for diplomas and want to know what your skills are, all those things are necessary to really get us in the area where we need to be in. I think your testimony was very excellent in that regard.

Mr. Cormany, in your testimony, you mentioned vouchers for training should be considered in work force legislation. I believe vouchers may work well in Vermont, but in larger states there are problems. There is not a strong accountability system, and a strong accountability system will most likely require significant monetary investment. What are your recommendations and cost estimates regarding the system that we would have to develop for accountability and the utilization of vouchers?

Mr. **Cormany**. I don't have a cost estimate.

The **Chairman**. All right.

Mr. **Cormany**. But I think that is why I mentioned the pilot process would be so important, and that is to set up small pilots around the country, perhaps. What is different, or what the distinction between the GI bill, for example, which has been compared to this type of voucher system through "skill grants," I believe the administration calls them, is that it was for a whole different purpose. This, we are looking specifically at training an existing or a prospective work force, and, doing that, there has to be certain safeguards.

That is, do we want to continue to fund job training programs where there is no relevance in the workplace? Do we want to give blanket grants to people entering the work force and job training or education programs where, in fact, there is no demand? That's why I suggested centering the voucher system around the one-stop career center system, where, in fact, that information, counseling and assessment tools, exist. I am not sure, at least in my mind, this type of system would cost that much more than what exists right now. It seems to me we can use the existing resources and simply utilize it differently; that is, make it more customer-oriented, where customer choice is the key as opposed to program need.

The **Chairman**. I would just comment on the voucher aspects. Since the President suggests vouchers and the republicans are just salivating for vouchers, it is a political realty we face. Probably, we are going to have vouchers. So what I want to make sure is, when we develop a system, that we have accountability and can measure output. And with all the problems we have had in the PELL programs and all with respect to how those kind of, really, vouchers are used, oftentimes with very, very poor results, that is why I asked the question.

Mr. Gold, what about with respect to the welfare areas? Do you think vouchers would be helpful, or what would your comments be?

Mr. GOLD. I guess my concern—I don't have a problem with customer-driven services. In fact, in the Reach Up Program in Vermont, we are organized on a customer-driven basis. Each of our participants in our Reach Up Program has a case manager, and they develop an individualized plan leading to an employment goal for that particular person, so the whole thing is tailored to that customer's particular strengths and whatever barriers or obstacles they need to overcome.

I think that making vouchers available—and maybe this speaks to the accountability issue you talked about, where there is a process in place where you are not just handing someone a voucher with no guidance and no boundaries, no information. And Bill spoke of the need to connect a voucher system to one-stop career systems where people could get that type of information for a welfare participant. At least in Vermont, that individual would have a case manager who would be working with him or her.

In addition, I guess my concern is vouchers for whom, to go where, for what programs? And my concern is, if we switch immediately over, or even within a short time frame, to a totally voucher-based system, there is—in Vermont, at least, there are a lot of wonderful nonprofit programs that aren't going to be able to sustain themselves in the competitive marketplace for participants carrying their vouchers into the program, and so we need to make sure that we can sustain those community-based and nonprofit—especially nonprofit, and even in the postsecondary ed system, where higher educational institutions either have some public funding coming into them—although in Vermont that is, at least for the public institutions, not a great deal of their budget—or private institutions having endowments, even there, you know, there is a real question as to whether they will be able to have the flexibility to adapt to the emerging marketplace and the needs of employers.

If it's all driven on a voucher-based system they are going to have to spend—my concern would be, at least in Vermont, small programs would end up spending more time marketing their program than doing the kind of program development they need to do to address the real issues, the real needs in terms of what the employers' need, and the skill areas they need to see developed.

So I am very concerned that, while vouchers, I think, have a place, customer-driven funding has a place, I think it needs to be approached in a balanced way, recognizing that we need to be able to continue to support the infrastructure and capacity of the kinds of programs we want the vouchers to be used in.

Now, who is the "we" that is deciding what the programs are that we want the vouchers to be used in? That is where I think we come back to what Vermont is attempting to do through the Human Resources and Investment Council and the Workforce Investment Board and Adult Education Councils, both at the State level and regional level system.

I agree with the comments we heard before that we don't want more proliferation of advisory groups or boards, that we want to consolidate those things. I guess my feeling is that, while there are organizations that have been in place for a long time, and may have been perceived as or been effective for a long time, we are involved in a changing situation, as you said earlier, not just comparing ourselves to ourselves or our immediate neighbor states, or even to the United States, but we are comparing ourselves now in a very new environment, which is a global environment, and we may need to change the way we are organized, and I think we do need to change the way we are organized to understand that global environment.

In Vermont, the HRIC has taken some pretty dramatic steps, I think, in terms of bringing people from Denmark and Austria to Vermont to talk about their education and training systems, and to send some key Vermonters to those countries to take a look at them firsthand. So I think the HRIC Workforce Investment Board, and Adult Education Councils who are connected to the Workforce Investment Boards are a proper answer to the question of who is the "who" that is deciding what the programs should be that the vouchers will be available to go to, at least in part. You know, there is plenty of room for the entrepreneur to say, I have a got a great program to train you for this or that, but I think we have a system emerging that will provide some accountability.

The CHAIRMAN. Joseph, any comments on this? But, also, I would like to ask you what we can do to encourage more small businesses to participate in School To Work programs.

Mr. PASKEVICH. You just have to ask me. I mean, I have enjoyed doing it. To be honest, I don't get to get out and talk to a lot of other businesses. I don't know who else has been involved. But if you have a network of people such as Don Schneider, the person I dealt with at Winooski High School, who came and spoke with me, gave me the opportunity try it. I was very uncomfortable. I was learning how to run a business, let alone how to raise a teenager. And after going through a couple of those, it became a lot easier.

I don't know how—to answer your question honestly, I don't know how you get out and talk to everybody, but if it is down to a level where it is one-on-one, you get to know the individual, have them come to speak to the owners. I think we all want to help, and, especially, in my position, being that it is not a college-educated position that I hire, that it does nothing but benefit us to do it, so get more people out and ask, I guess, because I think people will do it.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, all three of you, for excellent testimony. And I want to thank those that have come here today. We have got a standing room only situation here, and I am a little bit nervous about it, because our final panel is to allow all those that want to speak to have a chance to do so. So I would ask you, we are going to go into a break now, and we have managed to get ourselves pretty close to on time. But if you would go over to the table to Lisa, and those that want to actually speak, then let us know so we can figure out on the time and how we can handle it. While

I deeply appreciate you all being here, I assume you will be back for the next panel, an extremely important one, and those who want to speak, we will try our best to accommodate everybody.

We will take a break.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. I want to stay right on time if we can. We have about over 20 that want to express themselves after this panel is finished, so I want to make sure we stay on schedule so that I can give everyone the opportunity of being able to testify before a senatorial committee.

The allocation in time will be a minute and a half, so you have to get your thinking together, and we will ask also at that time for all of those that have signed up to form a line over that way, so there is no necessity for any lapse of time between speakers and we can accommodate as many as we can. Unfortunately, I have to get back to Washington. I would much rather stay here, but I have to be back there.

So we will go on to our next panel. Our fourth panel will discuss work force and education initiatives. Members of the fourth panel are Charles Boudreau, President and Chief Executive officer of the Vermont Science and Education Center; Gerald Brown, Chair of Board of Directors of Vermont Heating and Ventilating; Robert Clarke, President of Vermont Technical College, and our very kind host of the hearings; and David Coates, former managing partner of PKMG, Pete Marwick and Co-Chair of the Steering Committee for Champlain Initiatives.

STATEMENTS OF CHARLES BOUDREAU, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, VERMONT SCIENCE AND EDUCATION CENTER; GERALD BROWN, CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, VERMONT HEATING AND VENTILATING; ROBERT CLARKE, PRESIDENT, VERMONT TECHNICAL COLLEGE; AND ROBERT COATES, FORMER MANAGING PARTNER, KPMG PEAT MARWICK, CO-CHAIR, STEERING COMMITTEE, CHAMPLAIN INITIATIVE

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Boudreau?

Mr. BOUDREAU. Thank you, Senator. I want to thank you for the opportunity to come to this field session and testify. As you are aware, I am approaching this from a business point of view. I am definitely not an educator, my background is principally in pharmaceuticals, but I do think that we have many concepts that need to be addressed with respect to training and education associated with business, and I think it has been said here that business is the customer, and I think that is a very interesting and a very accurate observation. I don't know that everybody necessarily shares it, but I think it is a good observation.

The CHAIRMAN. I can assure you it is not universal. [Laughter.]

Mr. BOUDREAU. But I would like to acknowledge the fact that you, certainly, and the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources have accomplished much with respect to our needs of the young people as they strive to successfully enter the work force. But there is still much that remains to be done, and I think that is why we are here.

In an effort to augment current programs, a number of Franklin County businesses teamed together to develop a unique training facility for young people entering the work force. Through their efforts and those of supporters in a wide range of business, education, government services, the Vermont Science and Education Center is rapidly becoming a realty.

The Vermont Science and Education Center (VSEC) is a private, nonprofit corporation which offers an innovative combination of mentor-based industry-driven training to postsecondary students and other adult learners. All education provided to matriculated students is free of any charge, because VSEC covers its operational costs by performing contracted testing services for Vermont agricultural, specialty food and pharmaceutical industries.

The overall goal of VSEC is to improve the economic life of Vermonters by first, providing hands-on, experiential-based training to students and workers in state-of-the-art biological and scientific processes related to food processing and manufacturing industries of Vermont.

Second, offering a free education, which provides all qualified students, regardless of financial status, the opportunity to begin a career in science.

Third, linking VSEC graduates to area companies who will provide good, career-oriented jobs and tuition reimbursement programs so that their employees may continue their education.

And finally, building a skilled labor force in order to sustain existing manufacturing companies and attract new business to the area.

We believe that the Vermont Science and Education Center will give Vermonters the knowledge base upon which to build a 21st-century career. Now also related to this is the creation of a model institution and learning process that will replicate, or could possibly be replicated, I should say, in other rural states nationwide.

The Vermont Science and Education Center addresses, we believe very strongly, addresses a number of areas which business and industry have identified as being deficient in our current educational systems, at least as evidenced by those high school graduates and other young adults entering the work force. I'll go through the list.

The first area is subject matter to be included in critical education and training path. In a number of statewide and local forums, industry has identified critical areas of training which must be improved in order to ensure that prospective employees are productive and effective in the current industrial positions. These include communication. Effective oral and written communication skills are a basic requirement for virtually all positions in manufacturing and service industries. All education and training programs must include requirements for students to develop practical, not just creative, communication skills, including reading and understanding comprehensive instructional documents; writing brief but complete technical reports; effective public speaking skills for team endeavors—not necessarily for a large group, but certainly for team endeavors.

Computer applications. This includes working knowledge of the use of computers in data collection, storage and evaluation. Many programs today have been developed to establish or to prepare students in the area of computer literacy, but students must understand how computers are utilized as decision-making tools in an operational business. They must put them to use.

Decision-making skills. The ability of work force personnel to develop a logical decision path utilizing available data and provide proper documentation of the decision process is key. Students must understand that the vast majority of business decisions involve grey areas, versus the clear-cut right and wrong decisions prominent in most academic curricula. The skills necessary to work effectively in these grey areas must be developed.

Business concepts. All successful businesses today operate under a well established set of systems and processes which ensure customer satisfaction and compliance with appropriate standards. The effectiveness of work force personnel is dependent upon a functional understanding of customer focus, business as a process, utilization of documented systems, and operational control exerted by standards, whether they be international, as you have stated, government, or business or technical oriented standards. Anyone preparing for a career in industry must understand this process and be capable of participating.

Instructional approach, a second major area. More emphasis must be placed on implementing active learning concepts. The effectiveness of the instructional approach varies with different students, but, in general, students learn better by showing them why information or skills are important. The learning process can be greatly enhanced by immersing students in a functional business or microcosm of the world they ultimately will exist and work in. This approach stimulates the natural desire to learn and provides immediate feedback on the effectiveness and importance of the information learned or the operation performed.

So it is important that we have balanced learning. Yes, we have to learn theory, but we must also learn the practical applications to know where that theory must be applied.

The second area, and I think it has been brought up in a number of panel discussions thus far, includes the concepts of teaching the teachers, getting internships to include not only students but teachers, allowing the teachers to form the nucleus of an internship, and that way reduce some of the burden on businesses. And it is a tough burden for businesses to be able to work with interns when they already have a full plate in the business. If the teachers went in there and then we could center the students around the teachers, they could act as a focus point for internships, and learn as they go along.

The last major area includes cost of education. VSEC is a self-supporting training center, which is a somewhat different concept, if not totally unique. And this demonstrates the impact of business really becoming actively involved in what goes on with respect to education. Further areas that business or direct corporate support might include are local companies becoming involved with both instructional as well as providing instrumentation to area schools.

It is important, also, that we encourage companies with respect to tuition reimbursement programs. Many of them exist today, there is no question, but in many companies, they are focussed on a very narrow area. I think it is important that we broaden that and allow education to move out to other areas, which may, in the long run, become more critical than the actual dead-on focus that we have within certain industries.

And finally, a concept, I think, that was also broached is liberalizing college credit programs. It is important that we ensure that training facilities do allow students to progress on to formal institutions of education.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the fact that your staff and yourself have been extremely helpful in allowing us to bring about this project, which is the Vermont Science and Education Center. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Gerald, please proceed.

Please pull the mike over.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate this opportunity to appear before you to discuss ways to enhance the quality of our Nation's employment and training systems.

Lisa asked me to provide this testimony and to let you know all that I know about quality in 3 minutes, and the problem I have is I don't know what to do with the other 2 minutes. [Laughter.]

I am Gerald Brown. I am chair of the Board of Vermont Heating and Ventilating Company. I am a director of Fab Tech, Inc., with locations in Colchester and Winooski, VT, I am the director of the Vermont Council for Quality, I chair the Consolidated Council for Employment and Training, and I am a business member of the Vermont Human Resource Investment Council. In addition to my professional positions in Vermont, I hold appointments on a number of national boards that represent the interest of private sector employers in work force development programs.

As a businessman and private sector volunteer, I care deeply about the preparation of present and future workers. As I have seen in my own company, investing in people there is the single most important thing that we can do to ensure that businesses like mine remain profitable and competitive in these new world markets.

I believe that we have a major opportunity to truly engage employers in our publicly-funded work force system, to make them full partners in the design and delivery of employment and training services, not as mere advisors to the public system, but as engaged investors who share the vision of public policy makers and directors, and who have a stake in the success of the system.

Through my testimony today, I will offer an idea of how we can connect the public and private work force development efforts through the use of a common management tool that focuses on continual organizational improvement. The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award is an engine that has been driving private sector organizations to become world class. The purpose of the award is to recognize outstanding American manufacturing service and small business firms, and next year will include health care and education.

While there are many approaches to continuous improvement, the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award has provided the most comprehensive framework for a company. The Baldrige criteria are a powerful diagnostic instrument to help us identify organizational strains and key areas in need for improvement. As Congress develops new work force systems, they need to invest in developing high-performance public-private partnerships that will be successful no matter what program or services are incorporated into the business plan.

When we first applied the Malcolm Baldrige criteria to our company in 1985, after being in business for 35 years, a simple but outrageous discovery was made. We found we could not collectively agree on what our business was. We found, although we had worked very hard at what we were doing, we were not aligned and our energy was diffused. We had to change the way we conducted our business or be history.

As our company focused on to reach an agreed upon vision and mission, we drove management decisions by a constant set of 11 core values that underlied the Malcolm Baldrige criteria. By adopting these values, we bound our organization together, and found, in a short period of time, we were outrunning our competition by delivering ever-increasing value to our customers. Within 5 years, we won the American Olympia Award, and 5 years later, the Governor Dean Davis Outstanding Business of the Year Award.

By adopting these same values, organizations can optimize their performance. And why I give you this anecdotal example, what I see in our system is what we found in our business 15 years ago, about 15 years ago.

The core values are all good, common sense. Have a passion for customer-driven quality; creating a culture for continuous improvement and learning; management by fact; effective decision making through employee participation and development; improve operating inefficiency and lower costs to reduce cycle time; focus on improving design quality and preventing problems; guide organizations by a common set of measurable goals and a long-range view of the future; internal and external partnerships development with our suppliers and our customers—those partnerships are vital; practice good corporate responsibility and citizenship—we have to be a part of the community, we have to help the community grow and the quality we want to grow within the community; and to achieve excellence, the organization must be guided by effective leadership.

As I mentioned in my written testimony, the Malcolm Baldrige criteria are generic in any organization, private or public. It has a proven track record worldwide in the private sector, and has proven to work just as well within service organizations like those in the work force development system.

The national landscape for work force development is making dramatic changes in the way business is being done. The Enterprise council and the National Association of State Workforce Investment Policy Chairs has facilitated the formation of a strategic alliance with other work force development organizations to increase its capacity to further the mission and serve the customers. Its mission is to participate and promote and to provide leadership in the building of a quality work force system that is customer-driven, outcome-oriented, accountable to investors and customers, and continually improving.

The Enterprise promotes the use of Malcolm Baldrige criteria and recognizes these organizations in the Title III and Title IIA programs that demonstrate superior performance, high customer satisfaction, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

The Enterprise support teams are organized in regional quality academies. Out west, they call it "a summit." Hard questions are being discussed, such as what are our priority needs and areas of focus and quality and capacity building, and what resources would be most useful to us in meeting these needs? How can these initiatives be more effectively coordinated to better meet our needs? How can we maximize value and minimize cost? Those types of hard questions.

The National Association of State Workforce Investment quality chairs has proposed that the strategic alliance form a National Institute for Workforce Excellence. The leading partners in this endeavor are the National Alliance of Business (NAB), the National Association of Private Industry Councils, who you so kindly spoke to this spring, and the Enterprise. Its objectives are to build upon present initiatives, and build consistency, flexibility and economy into the delivery systems.

The Institute would be composed of three training academies. Leadership Academy is an amplification of the NAB-NAPC-IBM private industry leadership academy that has had excellent results in the past years, going around to the private industry councils and helping them develop leadership techniques, ways to better perform their work; a Quality Academy, which is an amplification of the present enterprise academy, which is going around in these regional work force areas, and there is an academy going to be held this week. About 500 people engaged in work force development will be there. I have the honor of actually running a class there with some people from ASQC. The institute would provide services to and through local State training institutes that are presently being formed throughout the Nation.

A National Association of State and Local Quality Councils was recently organized at a meeting in Austin, Texas. The mission of the association is to assist the State and local quality Councils in providing consistency, flexibility and economical assessments. State and local Quality councils have been promoted by the NGA since 1988, National Governors Association.

There are approximately 52 State and local quality councils operating in the Nation today. Most are using the Malcolm Baldrige criteria for excellence to identify performance excellence in business, schools, health care facilities and government agencies. 40 of the states now have operating quality councils. Vermont is the 41st, I believe. I think we are 41.

A national third party assessment organization can provide consistency, flexibility and economically can do that. It will be a boon to our work force development system. We will be able to measure the performance in Vermont as well as the performance in Oregon and see how they stack up to each other, and start looking for best practices, and then learn by these best practices.

The Vermont Council for Quality. The Vermont Consolidated Council for Employment created an ad hoc committee last year to organize a Vermont council for Quality. This spring, in March, the committee created the council under a 501C3 nonprofit organization. The council is privately funded and will earn its keep through fees for services. Surpluses through this operation will be used to fund scholarships for small businesses and needy individuals. Its goals are to improve the quality of Vermont work force development system buy identifying strengths and weaknesses through the Malcolm Baldrige self-assessment instrument.

The Quality Council, with the assistance of the Enterprise, held a two-day forum in Burlington for approximately 70 volunteers that are engaged in work force development strategies. The second forum is tentatively scheduled for July, and will be held jointly with other New England states in Lebanon, NH.

As the Congress looks at reforming the existing array of employment and training systems, it has an opportunity to build a management framework from the outset that will optimize organizational forums. Without wholesale consolidation, it will be particularly important to provide to State and local leaders tools that create an environment for continuous improvement. The Baldrige management tool will provide the framework.

I recommend that an accredited Malcolm Baldrige annual State assessment be a requirement of all federally-funded education and training work force development programs.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared remarks. Thank you for inviting me to offer my perspective on enhancing the work force development system. I would be happy to answer any questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Excellent statement.

Mr. Clarke?

Mr. CLARKE. Having spent 20 years in higher education, the last 13 at Vermont Technical College, I have been involved in the preparation of skilled workers throughout my career. More importantly, most of that time I have also been involved in the development and delivery of customized training programs for business and industry. Our Nation's competitive future does not depend upon our natural resources, it is dependent upon the skills and abilities of our work force.

As noted author and management guru Tom Peters remarked in his commencement address at VTC in 1995, via the Internet, we have over one billion workers in competition with our knowledge industry within one-tenth of a second.

In the competitive environment, there is a growing consensus in the United States that a technologically literate work force is a critical component of our Nation's human resources infrastructure. For America to compete successfully in the global marketplace, we need to develop a general level of scientific and technical competency that far surpasses what that been acceptable in the past.

Clearly, the challenge in the future is a technical challenge. In 1990, "America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages" noted, "The choice we have is to become a nation of high skills or one of low wages." Again, technical education was identified as critical to our ability to create and sustain a high-wage, high-skills economic base and compete in a global and worldwide market.

Our best data on employment trends notes that, by the year 2000, 75 percent of all jobs will require postsecondary education, and only 25 percent of those will require a baccalaureate degree.

It is that middle ground between high school and baccalaureate that will form the dividing line in American society over the next decade.

I strongly endorse and support the concept of a statewide, coordinated education and training system. This does not mean an autocratic bureaucracy. It emphasizes the need to avoid duplication and promote a strong focus on the need of students and employers.

As Chancellor Bunting noted, VTC, on behalf of a consortium of UVM and Vermont State Colleges, manages all education and training for IBM Corporation. However, most Vermont companies cannot afford to invest the significant funding that is required for work force development. We must develop alternative models that allow us to respond as appropriate to smaller companies, which is the Vermont marketplace.

VTC has been lucky to develop, with a lot of partnerships, an economic development infrastructure, but it is important to note that these partnerships never could have started without significant Federal funding.

In relation to block grants, I support HR1435's efforts to consolidate adult education, literacy, and job training programs into block grants. An important aspect that I also endorses is not to include the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act into the consolidated block grant.

However, I believe that each State should have the ability to determine the appropriate manner to distribute and utilize the fund under the block grant within the intent of the law. This authority should be delegated to the governor or a combination of the boards responsible for secondary and postsecondary education. Of importance to Vermont is that there be a small State minimum.

In reference to vouchers, I do not believe that the major focus of the program should be on vouchers. If you look at the programs in Vermont Technical College, we are the only college in the State of Vermont that offers all of our programs except for two. We need to focus also on developing, in a small State, the appropriate programs to deliver.

I also believe we should increase and have mandated a postsecondary set-aside in all Perkins Acts.

In addition, I think we should establish a work force development center that would have two main components. One would be a research and support division for the Workforce Investment Boards. If you look at the WIBs as they have been created, a number of people that have been involved say they need help, they need overall structure and guidance and support, and that we should design a system that provides support for those companies, those Workforce Investment Boards throughout the State.

I also think that we should have a work force education and training division as a component of the Workforce Development Center. The statewide focus of both WIB assistance and Workforce Education and Training should be a partnership that is vital to effectively implement both the WIB design and to be responsive to employers' and employees' needs. This partnership should draw on all work force resources.

And finally, I would like to say that, for the welfare reform programs, there is no quick fix. We must provide adequate funding for at least through Associate Degree programs, not one-year programs, and the best social welfare program we have in this Nation is a high paying job.

Thank you, Senator Jeffords, for your opportunity to be here today and for your visionary leadership that is nationally recognized by higher education.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. President?

Mr. COATES. Yes, sir.

Thank you for this opportunity. It has been a very diverse group, as you can see, and I will certainly add to that diversity, if I may.

Effective broad-based work force development is central to our efforts to build healthier communities here in Vermont. Now, the Champlain Initiative is a vision of a healthier Champlain Valley and Champlain Valley region. It was agreed upon by more than 250 individuals from all backgrounds and sectors of our community. It is a multisector collaboration among business, government, nonprofit and religious organizations and private citizens. It presents a community-built plan to influence the investment of human and financial resources to assure the physical, spiritual, economic, environmental, social and cultural vitality of our region. This action plan offers a pathway, a pathway to the future in five major areas. Sustainability, lifelong learning, individual and family support, community public health promotion, and governance and structures.

Today's relatively high levels of employment—almost a fully-employed economy, as you know—coupled with recently enacted welfare reform pose challenges to old ways of doing things. In a time of limited resources, the focus of government-funded work force training must now shift to those individuals in our community who are presently the least—I repeat, the least—prepared to move into jobs that provide a livable wage.

This shift will require more integrated systems, many of which we have heard about today, to provide support for people who may need more than just a job. Training programs cannot focus solely on learning to use cash registers, developing construction skills or becoming computer literate. Our approach must be customer-focused, not bureaucracy-focused. It is time to look carefully at exactly who is being served by our work force development programs at the grassroots level. At the grassroots level, Federal policy must strengthen the links between job training programs and human services, so that individuals who have been difficult to employ will have the social supports they need to succeed. These supports need to be offered in a seamless continuum of services, along with work force training.

Low-wage, low-skilled employment creates a cycle of dependency with a revolving door in and out of the welfare system. Consider one group of individuals whose success in obtaining jobs that pay enough to support a family will eliminate dependency on welfare. Single parents who are receiving aid to families with dependent children. To get a sense of the challenges facing these individuals, you need only turn to the recent Job Gap Study, of which your staff has copies. This was published in January, and I have copies over at the desk as well, by the Peace and Justice Center in Burlington.

Now, according to this study, 83 percent of Vermont's single parents who are working and supporting two children are earning less than a livable wage. That is 82 percent living on less income than it takes to provide the most basic needs such as housing, food, clothing and transportation.

We need to offer AFDC parents and others struggling to achieve the livable wage the opportunity to get out of the welfare cycle. This requires more than simple training in the skills needed to perform specific jobs. We must address many fundamental concerns before any work force development training can have a meaningful impact. These include education—I think we heard earlier that 42 percent do not have a high school diploma; day care and after school programs; life skills training; health services; public transportation. Now, without Federal policies that support customer-focused, integrated services, work force development programs will not achieve the desired outcomes and will fail, at a very high cost to society.

The Champlain Initiative embraces eight separate initiatives, each of which has a bearing on issues that impact our efforts to build a healthy and viable work force. Of these eight initiatives, I was going to cite four, but will only cite two that I think are particularly germane.

One is the Foundation for a Healthy and Just Community Initiative. This is a key for evaluating the potential impact of public and private investments on the health and well-being of our citizens. Its goal is to influence how decision-makers utilize resources in ways that provide greater opportunity for all people to share in the economic and cultural vitality of our community.

And the second and last that I will talk about is the most important one, quite frankly, the Our Children, Our Future initiative. This underpins all that we are attempting to accomplish in the area of work force development. It seeks to provide children with assets to make better choices throughout their lives. The more of these assets a child possesses, the less likely he or she is to engage in self-destructive behavior, and the more likely he or she is to make positive choices throughout life. The Our Children, Our Future initiative is mobilizing parents, youths, schools, neighborhoods, businesses, community agencies, government, police and congregations to work together to improve the lives of our children. No effort of the Champlain Initiative will have a greater impact on the work force of the future than this.

Most importantly, by investing our social and financial capital in those who need it today, we can prevent many of our children from continuing in the cycle of poverty. Throughout the Nation, healthy community collaborations such as the Champlain Initiative are taking place. We are building now strategic alliances among health and human services agencies, businesses, government and private citizens. Their goal is to direct and influence the investment of public and private resources back in our communities. They provide a capacity for decision-making that promotes community values, choices, and solutions that come from the bottom up.

So as you reshape Federal policy to coordinate and consolidate sound work force training programs, I urge you to work with these grassroots citizens' efforts across the country, and there are many of them going on right now. Here in the Vermont, the stakeholders of the Champlain Initiative stand ready to assist you in any way we can. I am confident your colleagues in similar health community endeavors across the Nation will do likewise.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Thank all of you for suburb testimony.

Mr. Clarke, I am a great fan of yours, as you know, and your institution here. You keep mentioning the term "postsecondary" rather than higher education, and I would like to note also that I use that term now. I know the European nations and some of the Asian nations found there is a real blurring going on now over traditional thinking of what is taught in high school and goes on in college. So these terms now are really not relevant.

What we are seeing is that, in the high school area, many things that were traditionally considered to be college programs—calculus and matters like that—are now in the high school. On the other hand, many of the college graduates are finding that the skills they needed to get a real job were things now being taught, at least being done, in the high schools. So they are noting a blurring of the systems.

I know that, out in California, Peter Smith is the head of a new university out there, which is very different from others, a real-world university I guess you would say, that says, we won't bother you with a bunch of things you don't have to know, because you are beyond the high school years, but you need the training, and we will give you credit for a lot of things, and teach what real-world needs are. I wonder if you would comment on whether that perception is something that sort of agrees with your thinking.

Mr. CLARKE. Yes, it does. I think what is critical is that we look at what are the needs of the two most important constituents, the students and the businesses that employ the graduates, and that we link the education and training so that we are being responsive to the needs of the business community, but not necessarily with a very detailed career vocational program at the secondary level, but that we are preparing a strong mix of transferable skills in math, science and technical areas they can take to the postsecondary level.

The strong linkage of the colleges and universities to the business communities is important, but it is going to be different than the education we had 60 years ago, yet most of our colleges and universities are very similarly designed to the way they were 60 years ago, and as colleges and universities, we must be more responsive and more career-focused. As the head of one Fortune 500 company said several years ago in that speech, he said the only thing we should be preparing are liberal arts graduates. And he was asked, "How many liberal arts graduates has your company hired in the last decade?" He said, "Zero." I think it is important to note the dichotomy between rhetoric and realty.

The CHAIRMAN. I would like to make another comment. Some people say, "Oh, my God, all you are going to do is worry about work and not about the humanities." I know I have Victor Swenson here who might leap up. But, anyway, I would like to point out also, for information, that the arts and humanities are incredibly important to keep students involved with their studies.

A recent study came out from those that do the College Boards and noted that, for those that took arts programs and studied in the humanities, they do 50 to 60 points higher than those that do not. So I want to make everyone aware, when I go charging around saying that you have to have business background, I also am well aware that the well-rounded student who knows the value of the quality of life does better than those that just concentrate only on their skills, so we have to have a balance there.

From the Audience. Please remember that.

Mr. **Clarke**. But if you look, Senator, even at VTC the quality of the diversity of our background and fundamental base is the math, science and communication skills; it is not only in the technical skills. That is a component, and a very important component. It is most important that what we do is teach a strong work ethic, you have to work hard to be successful, and the business community has the same feeling.

The **Chairman**. To have that, you have to learn discipline and respect in the schools, and that is where things like the arts and humanities come in. Any other comments from any panelists?

Mr. Brown?

Mr. **Brown**. Certainly, you know, the academic piece of a good employee is extremely important, and we talk about the academic side and the technical side as though you can't do those things together, like you can't chew gum and walk. I think it is extremely important that we have a work force that displays a good sense of the arts.

The **Chairman**. Is the current structure of the State Human Resources Investment Council and the Local Workforce Investment Boards positively impacting coordination between business and schools in Vermont?

Comments?

Mr. **Brown**. Attempting to. That is a very hard piece to do. We are spending a tremendous amount of energy in trying to get an alliance on these programs and coordinate these programs. I think that the legislation that the House has right now, and what you are proposing, as I understand it, is a consolidation of these major programs will free up enough energy to really get to the task of approaching the work force, rather than figuring out how we can work with this group or that group.

There is still some turf out there that is going to stay there until we take the funding away from this. I think, in Vermont, because it is a small State and because here we know everyone intimately, we are doing a lot toward consolidating and coordinating some of these programs, many of these programs.

The **Chairman**. Any other comments, or just on the general question of what do you recommend the Federal Government can do to assist in improving the coordination between education and training?

Mr. **Boudreau**. I think it has been said many times that it has to stem from the requirement that there be a coordinated effort between the groups that they do seek business education and those service functions within the government too. It is very, very key that they work together and I know that, in many areas, we are attempting to do that, but I think there needs to be something that drives this far further than where we are today. I don't know that we have got ten or twenty years to figure out how to do it. I think it needs to be done very, very quickly. I don't know what the answer is, but I think we know what the approach might be.

Mr. CLARKE. I think it is very critical that we have strong and vital linkages between educational policy and the business community. One of the problems we have with members of the business community is that they don't have the time or the energy to spend endless hours talking about issues. They need to address the issues, get on, and find solutions.

One of the things that is very important is strong statewide coordination with local delivery, yet we provide the resources and support structure for the local delivery to be able to be successful. What we don't want is 14 new investment boards reinventing the wheel in 14 different parts of the State. We need to provide the resources and support structures necessary for them to do what is relevant, linking the business community and educational process.

Mr. COATES. I would concur with what Bob Clarke has said. I just think it is very, very important to handle it that way, and try to consolidate as much with a unified voice.

But let me go back to the Champlain Initiative. That is all about, really, local control, in a large area. We aren't talking about a town by town by town, we are talking about a substantial region of the State, for instance, and to the extent the citizens there understand what their needs are, and are able to prioritize their needs, whether it is work force training or anything else, to me, that is the much more effective way, and pushing that up, rather than to say, "Everything has to look this particular way, has to be set up and have this different group of people running it."

To the extent you can push it up and let the people there take responsibilities for making the community a better place to live and work—and, incidentally, a good job is one of the most important requirements of a healthy community. One of the reasons why I am involved with it is because I come from the business community.

The CHAIRMAN. Any other comments? All right. Thank you.

Sure, Harold, go ahead.

Mr. BROWN. I would just like to make this comment. That is, we already have the structure in place to effect a high quality work force development system in Vermont, the HRIC, which, unfortunately, is not funded, or it may be funded this year by about $85,000, a far cry from the kinds of moneys it needs to do the support work for the WIB. The WIB, on the other hand, is a group of volunteers, mostly business volunteers, becoming frustrated because we don't have the capacity at the HRIC level, to support the WIB, given we need a way to find out how we can support these local volunteers that really are interested in seeing that system get built. We don't need to build another system off to one side; we have the system already in place, and just haven't found a way for the desire to fund the HRIC or to fund the WIBs.

The **Chairman**. Thank you all for tremendously helpful testimony. I look forward to working with you as we go forward. Thank you.

We will now get some personal perspectives on the work force development issues. We will hear from Theresa Baker, a student from Northland's Job Corps; Ken Foote, an Apprentice at the Essex Technical Center; and Candice Crowley, a former Adult Basic Education student. Ron Skorstad was supposed to be here, but, unfortunately, he cannot, because of an illness in the family.

STATEMENTS OF THERESA BAKER, STUDENT, NORTHLAND JOB CORPS; KEN FOOTE, APPRENTICE, ESSEX TECHNICAL CENTER; CANDICE CROWLEY, FORMER STUDENT, ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

The **Chairman**. Theresa, please proceed. Bring the mike over there. Right.

Ms. **Baker**. Thank you for inviting me. It is nice to see you again.

The **Chairman**. Good to see you again.

Ms. **Baker**. I found out about Job Corps from a friend who had attended, and later from my mother. When I first heard about it, I thought it was a place for other people, a place for people who, unlike me, had no college background, no desire to succeed, no future

Since I began Job Corps, I have met many people who not only have a strong desire to make it in the real world, but also have a future. During the summer of 1996, I found myself facing the breakup of my family. While it was made clear that I always would have a place to live, I felt I would be a drain on my family if I stayed. I was one of those students that just couldn't get out of the house, I guess. They had to kick me out.

At this time, I was working in a job I knew I did not want to be at forever, and I had no other marketable skills. Job Corps became my best bet. Recently, I was asked what benefits I have received from Job Corps. And I could not believe what I was hearing. What has Job Corps given to me? I get a place to live, food, clothes, and training.

The training is the most important benefit I get. First, is my trade, business, where I have learned how to file, to type, office procedures and two versions of WordPerfect. I have a part in running the center newspaper as well as being a member of the Women in Community Service group. I am a chief justice on both the residential and the education and training councils. These councils decide on student sanctions for infractions on center.

Recently, I competed in the Regions 1 and 2 business skills competition. In June, I will be attending the Vocational and Industrial Clubs of America national competition in Kansas City, Missouri with five other Northland students. We will be competing in the opening and closing ceremonies. In my dorm, I am head leadership. I oversee the chores in the morning and keep an eye on the girls. Anyone who has done this before or has children knows exactly how much energy this takes. I am not saying that they are children, it is just a lot of girls.

My short-terms goals include getting my driver's license through Job Corps, starting my second trade, retail sales, and looking into finishing college, possibly through Job Corps as well. Before I came to Job Corps, my long-term goal was to own a martial arts studio. I still have that dream, but Job Corps has opened up so many more possibilities. I may even come back and work for Job Corps someday.

My most important goal for the moment, however, is to show Job Corps can help anyone. Often people get the wrong view of the students at Job Corps. I want to change that. We want to succeed, and each of us can have a bright future if we work for it.

I just want to make the comment that my view of Job Corps has very much changed. I know that right now, after 8 months of being there, I don't think I can imagine my life without it being part of my life. Because I had nowhere to go, and I didn't want to be, you know, one of these people who just lives with their parents for the rest of their life. It just wasn't happening. And now Job Corps has given me a chance to go somewhere.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for very helpful, moving testimony.

Ms. Crowley?

Ms. CROWLEY. I am going to read from my written testimony and then make kind of a side comment as well.

My name is Candice Crowley. I appreciate the opportunity to speak here to you. I want to actually tell you a brief story of how I came to be here and how this pertains to why we are all here today.

Approximately 15 years ago, I became pregnant and gave birth to my son, at age 16. With some support from the school I was attending and my mother, I continued on with school. However, at age 17 and in my junior year, I became pregnant again. This time, however, I only had the support from my family. I was forced to quit school and apply for my GED.

But I was not content with this. I pleaded to a local college to accept me based on my grade point average, and began to work part-time toward an Associates Degree in business administration. However, the struggle to keep up my studies, raise my children, and a breakup with their father forced me to reevaluate what I had hoped to accomplish.

I again halted my education for a while and looked for other ways to "give back," as I was being supported by NAFC and other welfare programs. I was approached during that time by Planned Parenthood of Northern New England to join a pilot project called The Teen Parent Panel. It was hoped, by sharing my experience as a teen mom, we could help decrease the rising numbers of teen pregnancies in the State.

Around 1989, I was extremely frustrated with the degradation, problems and shame of being one of the statistics associated with the welfare system. I began looking for a way to support my family and came across the Essex Technical Center's dental assistant program. This seemed to be the answer to all of my prayers. It was a fairly quick program to complete, with only 2 years during school hours, and the starting pay in the profession was what I was looking for.

You see, back then, the welfare system determined what the basic need for a family of three was per month. They then distributed ANFC and food stamps that amounted to approximately 69 percent of that basic need per month. However, the other 31 percent of your basic need went unmet. You could not make or be given the rest of what you needed to basically make it every month. However, if you fell short on paying an electric, gas or rent bill, you were made to feel ashamed to ask for more so that your children could not go hungry, cold or homeless.

But in order to get off this system, I needed a job that paid $8 per hour, 40 hours a week, with full medical and dental benefits to make what I was receiving from the State to survive. I could realistically achieve this with this program.

While continuing my studies in dental assisting, I was encouraged by my instructor to fulfill my dream to actually get my diploma. It seemed Adult Basic Ed had a program for adults to study and receive an actual diploma, on my own time and my own pace. Since I felt I could handle the extra studying at night, I applied and was accepted by the adult program. In 1990, I completed my work and was asked by Colchester High School if I would like to attend graduation ceremonies with the remaining graduating class, which I tearfully accepted. While attending the ceremony here in Randolph with all the other graduating adult basic ed students, I broke down before a crowd of 700 when I merely got up to State that I did this for me, not my children, and I succeeded.

I now have gone on to manage a specialty dental practice. I have encouraged three family members to go through adult basic education for their diplomas, including my husband. I have enjoyed watching their self-esteem and situations improve after achieving this goal, and cried with them at each ceremony.

I myself have utilized many systems in place to achieve my goal—Employment and Training, Adult Basic Education, The Essex Technical Center, the Step Up Program, to mention a few. However, these programs did not work in conjunction with each other. I was lucky enough to have the drive and support to reach out to each of them for help, and to get it.

However, the struggle to make myself independent was extremely difficult. I was told by my welfare worker, if I wanted off the system, not only would I have to suffer, but my children would as well. I was told I was being greedy and ungrateful when I protested the reduction of $11 in food stamps for a job that only paid $17. I was made to feel ashamed that I was not given enough to make ends meet, and I was made to account for every penny to make sure I had not been frivolous and hadn't wasted the money I did receive from the State. I was lucky enough to be stubborn and not let these people, who were supposed to be helping me, drag me down.

The system in its entirety needs changing. The attitude of the legislature and the public needs changing. And the systems available to us need to work together. Not everyone, indeed most, don't have this fortitude. Therefore, without the State and Federal Government behind them, they will fall.

Now the other comment I wanted to make was that, we have talked a lot today about concepts to make this work. And I have been hearing for years a lot of great concepts and seeing a lot of good things come to pass. But I think, to really make workfare and welfare reform work, not only do all these programs have to work together, but they have to work side by side as a cooperative, and as a mandatory cooperative, that each and every person trying to get out of the welfare system or back into work has to use.

For example, if I were to go and apply for ANFC, I believe that if a person applying had to have an assessment evaluation where it was determined at that point my need for SRS intervention to help with family counseling, our need to make an appointment with a continuing education coordinator, and they would then determine whether or not basic education was needed, continuing education or even higher learning at that point. I think, also, as part of that assessment evaluation, it needs to be determined that Reach Up Programs can help me, or other programs that are there might benefit me in my initial situation, and that people not only applying for the welfare program but applying for employment and training, other avenues of coming into the system, it be mandatory that they keep close ties with all of these organizations on a regular basis to help them rehabilitate back into the work force.

If we institute a system such as this, where all the systems you are required to use so that they all work together, we can get people off State aid within 5 years of going on it, maximum. I really think that something like that would work. I really would like to see these concepts come together for a specific idea.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Candice. [Applause.]

Mr. Foote?

Mr. FOOTE. Senator, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to tell my story on how The Essex Technical Center helped me find a career goal.

When I began my high school career, I thought it would be the best 4 years of my life. Unfortunately, after 1 year at Colchester High School, I hated school. I would rather have gotten a full-time job than waste the next 3 years learning nothing in school. I had a hard time my freshman year. I could not adapt to the lectures and book work.

Then I was given the opportunity to further my education at the Essex Technical Center, where most of all the learning that I would be doing would be hands-on. Without hesitation, I enrolled in the pretech program. The program is designed for students that have no idea what they want to do after school. By taking time in each program the Essex Technical Center has to offer, it helped me find that I liked printing computer graphics. That meant getting involved with computers, finally, something I liked to do.

By the time I was done my sophomore year, I knew exactly what I wanted to do. I became very interested in the printing, so I enrolled in the printing program. Very soon after I started in the printing program, I found the doors to my future being held open, and all I had to do was to prepare myself to walk through it. I decided to become very involved in the class and the technical center so I could allow myself to be available for future opportunities.

By the end of my junior year, I had prepared myself enough so I was able to get a full-time summer job at Lane Press, working in the bindery. This was giving me hands-on experience and helped me to further my skills in the field. When school started again in the fall, I was allowed to go through the apprenticeship program and receive further hands-on experience, once again at Lane Press.

By spending time in each department, learning from the people that do that job every day, giving me a different look on things, how they work. By the end of December, I was hired in the contact frame department, and I worked there full time, receiving credit through school and also continuing my experience in the printing field, so in the near future, I can be able to move forward into a higher position at Lane Press. If I didn't make the choice of going into the pretech program, I would not be where I am today. It gave me the outlook I needed to succeed in school.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Ken.

I want to thank all of you. It has been very, very helpful.

I would like you to review for me how you learned about the various programs you got into, and what we can do to improve the knowledge of young people that these programs are available.

Mr. FOOTE. Making home schools announce these other programs, make them more easier to get into. I had to dig and scratch to find the information about the Essex Technical Center. They didn't want me to know. There are some schools I have heard of that will tell you can only go 1 year, but which you can go more than 1 year. The home schools have to want to educate the students more about these opportunities to succeed.

The CHAIRMAN. Candice?

Ms. CROWLEY. I also really had to dig. Quite honestly, all the programs that I used were hiding under a rock someplace. That doesn't happen as much now. There are a lot more out there than there used to be. In fact, when I joined the Technical Center dental assistant program, they were thinking of closing the program because there was not enough attendance. Now they have waiting lists every single year, because the community knows they are out, the students know they are out there. It is better, but, again, the home schools need to make the explanation, the community needs to know. Unfortunately, they need to market themselves a little bit more. And these systems really have got to start not only working together, but stop looking at themselves, and we need to stop looking at them, as separate entities.

The CHAIRMAN. Theresa?

Ms. BAKER. All right. I think we should have people go out, you know, say, this is what we have, this is what is available to you, especially into the high schools. I never knew that it was okay not to go to college. I was brainwashed into thinking college was where you went after high school. I went through all the college prep classes, and went through 2 years of college. I wouldn't give up right now, I wouldn't give up that experience at all, but I was not ready for them. I wasn't ready for them with money, I wasn't ready for them with my study skills. I imagine a technical program might have benefited me more.

However, having those 2 years behind me, I have many more opportunities now in Job Corps, because I have so many things that are opened up to me. The VCA program, the business competition program. Maybe 2 years ago I wouldn't have had that choice. I think we need to go out there and say, it is okay not to go to college, it is okay if you want to use your hands.

The CHAIRMAN. Go ahead, Candice.

Ms. CROWLEY. One other comment I want to make.

We really need to reeducate the public, because technical programs are considered by students as being a way to get out of their regular classes, and we have taught them that because a lot of teachers and home schools feel that that is what technical programs do, send the students off so they don't have to take math and English, you know, they are going to go work on cars.

We also need to reeducate business people that, because I graduated from the tech program, that does not mean I don't have the same level of education to manage my practice as someone who finished their two-year degree in business administration. I have heard comments from a lot of people today and other days from the legislature and otherwise that Basic Ed students, you know, are a strain on these resources, the amount of people needing basic education is such a strain on the system. You are taking those people and putting them in a box and saying they are different, and they are not.

The CHAIRMAN. I think that is very pertinent and helpful. Thank you, all three of you, for very excellent testimony, and I hope we all learned something from it.

Yes, Theresa?

Ms. BAKER. I just wanted to make one more comment.

I sat here all morning and listened to what everybody was saying. I just want to make sure that everybody realizes that everything that you are talking about affects us. It affects my children when I have them. We are like the guinea pigs. Anything you decide to do, we do it, it is us that has to do it.

You know, so please be careful and be very cautious in what you do, because it is not necessarily society as it is now that is going to have to pay, it is society in five or 10 years that is going to have to pay. I am going to have to pay, Ms. Crowley is going to have to pay, and Mr. Foote is going to have to pay. Please just be careful with what you do.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very, very much. [Applause.]

We now will listen to those who have asked to be heard from and who want to hear from.

The first is a group who would like to make some comments, and then we will go to individuals. Just, please, as I said, kind of gather in the corner over there so we won't lose any time transitioning to the table. If the first group comes forward and sits at the table with the microphone, we have to pass the mike back and forth.

The first group are representatives from the Burlington Technical Center. There are four.

STATEMENTS OF LAURI JOSEPHSEN, INSTRUCTOR, CAREER IN DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATION, BURLINGTON TECHNICAL CENTER; ANNIKA ERICKSEN, HOLLY MANIATTI, STUDENTS AT THE BURLINGTON TECHNICAL CENTER; SUE CARPENTER, PARENT AND STUDENT, BURLINGTON TECHNICAL CENTER

The CHAIRMAN. Nice to have you here.

Ms. JOSEPHSEN. Thank you. It is very nice to be here.

The CHAIRMAN. I don't know how you want to work it among yourselves, but whoever speaks, introduce yourselves and tell me who you are and where you are from.

Ms. JOSEPHSEN. We are going to each take 1 minute, introduce ourselves, and pass it down the line.

My name is Lauri Josephsen. I am the instructor for the program called Careers in Design and Illustration at the Burlington Technical Center.

This program came about through a Perkins grant. We very much needed Federal money to start this program. It is the only one of its kind in the State, and it is an award-winning program. We have an advisory committee that is made up of graphic design firms in Burlington that do international work, and we help students to take their artistic goals, their artistic talents, and fly them in real world job situations. We have ten different sending schools that we serve, and we take communities' students, many of whom are disenfranchised from a typical high school environment, are students at risk, who are visual learners and who just know they are have an interest in the arts, they don't know what they want to do with it, and, often, high school art programs don't know what they want to do with it either.

So we try to take these students and teach them about different careers in the art, give them access to a state-of-the-art computer lab, give them technical skills with computers, and give them a chance to merge their artistic interests with technical interests, to give them a real chance to start a career. We feel like this is a really important education for them, and it gives me a chance to mentor students and really help them find where they can find a place in the work force.

Ms. ERIKSEN. I am Annika Eriksen. I am a student at Burlington High School and The Technical Center.

First, I would like to say that the myth of vocational and technical training is that it ends there, and then you go into the work force. I always knew that I would go into college. From a very young age, I just assumed I would be going to college. But as I got into high school, I realized that I didn't really know what direction I wanted to take. I knew I was interested in art but couldn't possibly be an artist, since I am the type of person that just needs to have a steady job and a salary.

So I went into the technical course, and I was able to research possible careers and avenues for me to take. I realized that I think it would be good for me to pursue international business, with a strong emphasis on arts management. And I was able to manage a gallery exhibit on Church Street and build up my portfolio for entering colleges, and build up computer experience so that I can get into a good college, and, once there, I can prepare myself for my career.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. MANIATTI. Hi. My name is Holly Maniatti, and I am a student at South Burlington as well as the Burlington Technical Center. I came from the Northeast Kingdom, where technical education meant a dead end. About a year ago, I had like four million directions and no focus. The transformation in my mind set has been phenomenal. I started out with crayons and now I am successfully using photo shop to design prom tickets, T-shirts, and album covers for local bands.

The mentoring and individual career counseling saved me a lot of time and frustration. It helped me decide the path of my life. I now have control over my future, and I will pursue a career in communications with a focus on graphics design. The basic skills that I have acquired at the Burlington Technical Center have given me options globally for a career and a very productive future.

The comprehensive art and business education I have received has been invaluable and given me skills in writing a resume, finding a job, and independently managing myself. This education is a tool that I will use throughout my college years, and it will benefit me, as well as all others that I come in contact with.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. CARPENTER. My name is Sue Carpenter. I am Holly's parent. She is a student at the Burlington Technical Center. In just 1 year at two and a half hours a day, 12 and one half brief hours a week, I bear witness as a parent to the impact this future-based educational system provided my child.

Holly has gone from just babysitting to being employed by Ben & Jerry's, creating a database, and is now employed in computer sales. This same student, 20 months ago, had no tools, and is now preparing portfolio on an interactive CD tour. Her highly marketable skills are a direct result of her training at the Burlington Technical Center.

Even for myself, on the opposite end of the spectrum, after 12 years of sales at the age of 40, I made a lateral move to sales support with a major corporation, and I bear witness to the huge need for the amount of retraining in our corporate work force. This can all be prevented by strong technical programs in place at the high school level. That is the optimum investment we can make at this point.

It was Winston Churchill who said—and I have this on our wall at home—"You make a living by what you get, but you make your life by what you give." And this program gives these students lives they would not otherwise have had.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you again.

Just a second. I want to commend you and make a comment. I think we have concentrated too much on the only way you are successful is if you go to college. I think that has been established in the minds, but it is just not true, as you have pointed out. It is good, it is important, but we shouldn't just measure success on how many people got into Harvard. It should be how many got into a good life with a good job and have the skills necessary to make their life fulfilled and happy. You are testimony to that, and I appreciate very much your comments.

Now you can clap. [Applause.]

Now we have some individuals who want to express themselves. I am sure they will all do it as well as we have heard.

Kevin Christie?

Come right forward and have a seat, and please proceed. Thank you very much for coming and being willing to.

STATEMENT OF KEVIN CHRISTIE, VOCATIONAL DIRECTOR, RANDOLPH, AND VICE CHAIR OF GOVERNOR'S REHABILITATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mr. CHRISTIE. Thank you very much, Senator. It's a great opportunity to speak today.

I was trying to decide what to talk about while we were listening to all of this testimony. You know, I wear a number of different hats. I am a father of two young daughters who will be facing this new system that we are talking about creating, and I want to make sure that they have every opportunity possible to expand their career focus, like the people we heard from today. My other job is a Vocational Director here in Randolph, and my third hat that I am wearing today is as Vice-Chair of the Governor's Rehabilitation Advisory Council.

So you put all of those into trying to come up with something to say that will, hopefully, help us all. We heard a lot of very positive things about how we can get our system to work here in Vermont. I think that what it is going to take on all of our parts is letting go of our egos and focusing on our mission and what is important to our constituency, which is all of those players who we have talked about, our business partners, our kids, our friends, our colleagues.

You know, I think about, you know, how I got here, and some of those people that were spoken about as far as the adult group, when I look at resources for adults here in Vermont, back in the early 1980s, I went through a very trying time in my life. I had operated several businesses, here in this State, and, actually, lost them all, okay, as a result of that a depression situation that had occurred. And I had to find help here, in order to get back, you know, let's say, on the road of wellness. And if it hadn't of been for the resources here in the State, such as VOC Rehab, I wouldn't be sitting here today.

Since that time, I have gotten my master's degree, and I am presently involved in a doctoral program. We have, in our region, created a School To Work board, and committee. We have a Workforce Investment Board that is on its way. What I have tried to do, at least, is not as a leader, I will just say as a steerer of the ship, so to speak, is to stay as far out of peoples' way as possible. I am the conduit, you know, I get them to the meetings, and try and facilitate the process, and I think that, as we do that—I heard issues about regional advisory boards, we heard issues about, you know, how we can get people to work collaboratively together. Well, I see a lot of the same people three or four times a week at different meetings, and why not meet together once instead of three times? That would work for me, and I think it would work for most of us.

If we can really just focus on two or three or four things that we want to accomplish, and then take that energy that we have been expending on running from one end of the State to the other to these meetings, I think we are going to get a lot more bang for our buck. And that is where you and your legislation will hopefully help us, as far as directing us to that point.

The point also made earlier about supporting the WIBs in their efforts as far as consolidating, it is very critical right now, as I watch our WIB coming together, to have the resources necessary to move us forward. Right now, there are a lot of people at that table, business people, educators, human service people, who are at the same, let's say, problematic stage of their career. Not enough time. And we do need the support, you know, hopefully from a resource consortium or executive directors that might be provided by the funding, to help us move this process forward.

So I guess, in closing, I would like to thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. I especially appreciate your background and your expertise. Thank you.

All right. We have Grey Meyer, David O'Brien, Executive Director, Rutland Economic Development Corporation; Carin DeMayo; and Jim Masland.

STATEMENTS OF GREG MEYER, SCHOOL-TO-WORK COORDINATOR, RANDOLPH REGION; DAVID O'BRIEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RUTLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION; CARIN DeMAYO, SCHOOL-TO-WORK COORDINATOR, RUTLAND REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE; AND JIM MASLAND, SCHOOL-TO-WORK COORDINATOR, UPPER VALLEY

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Please introduce yourselves before speaking.

Mr. MEYER. Senator, I am Greg Meyer. I am School-to-Work Coordinator here in the Randolph region. I would like to say, thank you for inviting me here today and giving me a chance to make two very brief points, so that everybody else can go.

The first thing I did want to say, we are here today talking about developing some comprehensive work force development legislation. I guess what I would urge you and the rest of the committee to do, as a starting point, is really look at the School to Work Opportunities Act, which was passed in 1994. The Act speaks to many of the concerns you have regarding relevance of education and career exposure and awareness for students, and I think all of us working in the School to Work Initiative, and I think everybody here probably can agree that, providing students, even K-through-6th-grade students, awareness to the opportunities around them is the foundation that any work force development policy really needs to be built upon.

If we are talking about training people for jobs, the first thing those people that are going to be trained need to know is what jobs are out there, whether they are here in the backyard, in Randolph, or statewide, or even on a national or international level. I am working as a grassroots organizer in a lot of ways, trying to make connections, business education partnerships that, hopefully, will result in creating those awareness of opportunities for students. There is a dire need for them.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. MEYER. I did say two points. That was the first one.

The CHAIRMAN. Never hesitate up there. [Laughter.]

Mr. MEYER. OK.

The second point I wanted to make was, you had asked an earlier panelist how we could bring in more small businesses into the School to Work initiative. There are a couple things we are doing the grassroots kinds of organizing, little, really, knocking on businesses' doors and saying, "Hey, would it would be okay if we brought some students over here to work with you, to shadow, and see what is going on?" There needs to be a State level infrastructure to support those sort of workplace learning experiences.

Here in Vermont, we have three separate components to that infrastructure that we are building. One is a public engagement piece, where we are just trying to let more and more business people know that there are opportunities for them to participate in the education of the states' children, and support from higher level individuals, including yourself, is always helpful in that regard. When people know that Senator Jeffords and his committee is supporting these kind of activities, they are sometimes more willing to leave the door open when I come knocking.

A second piece that is really important, and maybe even more important, is a risk management policy where, at least here in Vermont what we are thinking about is making sure that every school that is going to be placing students out into the community has appropriate insurance coverage, so that businesses that we are asking to participate aren't exposed to some sort of liability that could not only cause a lot of problems with them and the student at the time, but could scare other businesses and employers in the community from participating. We have a committee that is looking at that issue and we are working hard on that how to solve that problem.

The CHAIRMAN. We would like to hear from you on that. This is the first time that has been raised. I certainly would like to know what the problems are.

Mr. MEYER. OK.

And finally, the third piece of that, how to bring in small business people is, we are looking to invest a lot of time and energy, and probably dollars, I should say, into professional development for educators as well as employers in what it takes to provide a safe, helpful learning environment for those work-based learning experiences for students, and until educators are provided that professional development in how they can bring kids out of the schools into the workplaces, and until business owners and other employers are provided the resources on how to make those experiences worthwhile, and not just a fleeting experience for a student that is forgotten after they are done, it is going to be really hard to make such a system work.

So those are some of the things we are doing, and I wanted to share that with you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. O'Brien?

Mr. O'BRIEN. Good morning. I am David O'Brien, an Executive Director of the Rutland Economic Development Corporation. The one promise I will make is that I will move as quickly as I can and touch on a few things, and I will try to make it more of a bullet-type thing, to cover it in the time.

My economic development organization is going to be 60 years old this year, and it's only interesting today in that many years ago, and not too long ago, we thought that we were really successful if we built a spec building in a given year and put a company in there. Today, I would have to say the only way I think we are

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successful is if we can ensure that our students and work force is skilled enough to be employed, and not just to be employed. I think there is a misperception out there, because the unemployment rate is four and a half or five percent across the State on an average basis, that we have this thing licked. The reality is that there is a whole range of people that are underemployed. I think some people would like to say the expansion we have seen in the last few years, where X numbers of jobs are created, are actually held by a much greater number of people. So I think that is an issue.

We have heard this morning a lot about what is. I think I heard a lot of service providers talking about their programs and the pros and cons of them, and I think the idea behind this legislation and the idea behind a block grant is that we think about things differently.

I think there is a presumption that what is is not ultimately getting us the outcomes that we want. And I think that the most important thing is that we look at this new block grant as a competitive process. And I would offer the—I did not see this question answered in the summary that I read, is that I assume this is an open competition, not just from existing providers but from third party private sector providers. And talking about private sectors, I think that, clearly, the Franklin County Initiative is a great example of what can be done from that standpoint.

As being a member of a Workforce Investment Board, I think what is troubling to me is that I still am looking at the issue of education and outcomes from an anecdotal standpoint. I think there is a lot of discussion about, or a perception that our education system is not delivering, but I haven't seen a lot of hard data that tells me where we stand and where we need to improve.

You have heard about, how can we structure the delivery of these funds in the State of Vermont, and there is Workforce Investment Boards here in Vermont, and then it changes across the Nation, and I guess I would say that there is no question that the infrastructure is here, it is a question of empowering it. The Workforce Investment Boards do not carry the credibility, either with the education community or with the business community, in order to—and they don't have any authority to dictate what will happen.

So I guess I would echo what some other people hinted at, is that I think you have to put purse strings or strings attached to the funds that you are going to distribute so you bring people to the table and expect them to do that.

Simplify the delivery system. If we are going to simplify the ways these programs and efforts are funded on the Federal level, why aren't we simplifying that here in Vermont in the State? I offer that from the standpoint that I find it increasingly very odd that our debate in Montpelier is about how to fund education before we talk about how we want to restructure it. And, in fact, the legislation that would do so, i.e., governance, reducing school districts, if that's the case, is all pretty much in the talking stages at this point and won't be implemented. So we kind of have the cart before the horse in that regard.

Finally, I would just offer this. Anything we do in making these changes and improving our work force education system, and our

K through 12—I don't think we should forget about K through 12—all relates to a change in culture and the way we do things. We are still talking about changing an education system that is still based on an economy that no longer exists. That is the critical issue. And for that purpose, we have to engage the State goals. I can't tell you how refreshing it was to hear students in the latter stage of this hearing this morning and hear what they had to say, and the perception specifically about tech ed and its validity.

And in that regard, I think we have to make sure, as work force development boards and people involved in this, that we make sure that we engage the parents and the school boards. And I have heard the term local control talked about quite a bit today, this morning, and I think, if you boil it down to the least common denominator of each town school board, and the idea of local control, and if you go to some meetings or start to look at the issue, you realize that local control, in effect, is not a realty, because the school board makes the decisions, the teachers' contracts are negotiated, mandates are established by the State of Vermont.

If you compare that to our competitors—and I think, Senator, you have been very accurate in talking about our benchmark should not just be other states in this country, but other countries. In other countries, they have Federal standards. Austria has that, Germany has that, numerous other countries have that. The reason I am saying that is because, at the very least, we should be establishing State standards in Vermont and not devolving it down to local boards to articulate their own vision to that degree. I have to finish.

That is my final comment.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Carin DeMayo.

Ms. DEMAYO. I am Carin DeMayo. I am the School-to-Work coordinator, and an employee of The Rutland Regional Educational Alliance, a Workforce Investment Board.

I think that Greg was speaking on behalf of many of the School-to-Work coordinators in his comments, but I want to add sort of a perspective from working for a Workforce Investment Board as well in what I have been seeing.

There are so many boards out there, as was noted and mentioned earlier. We are all being told we have to create a new, sustainable, comprehensive and cohesive system. And I believe that, by excluding K-12 or even preK-6 from the work force development education and training discussion, that we are doing ourselves a disservice, and we need to realize the implications of preK through 6. Prevention is a lot less expensive. One of the indicators of dropouts is whether or not a student was reading at the third grade level.

So I think we really have to consider, we are not telling kids what they have to be when they grow up, what we are doing is explaining to them what options are available and really giving them the ability to make some decisions in their lives that will make them successful, whatever that means to them.

I believe that, if we do exclude it, we are just putting a Band-Aid over the issue by doing just additional training and additional education after the fact. Not that we don't have to continue training and look at lifelong learning, but that we really need to look at this as a whole system, not just looking at education, but the implications of health and human services in a student's learning, in an employee's ability to concentrate.

We really need to take all those boards that we are talking about—the WIB, the Agency of Human Services, local boards—we need to come together as one with that revived energy that we are all running out of steam, and really get out there and be able to meet the needs in a fashion that Ms. Crowley was talking about. That is really—we are ultimately here for them and that is why we need to come together. And I believe that your legislation is really heading us down a pretty good path, but I again would urge you, we have to look, I think, a little bit more broadly than what we have been.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Carin.

Mr. MASLAND. Jim Masland, the School-to-Work Coordinator for the Upper Valley, so-called, out of White River Junction. And lest there be any misunderstanding, or lest I step on any toes, I am speaking on my own behalf. [Laughter]. But I am not likely to step on too many toes.

I would like to address some of the questions that you brought up earlier or that were addressed earlier in the morning, one having to do with structures, and then some concerns about vouchers. I, myself, am a little skeptical about vouchers, but I understood you to say that they are out there, so what shall we do about this.

I would like to support the testimony of at least several of the preceding speakers, Gerald Brown being one, and I think William Laramee being another. Gerald Brown was saying, for example, we don't need to invent another structure to set along the side. We have one in place, or nearly in place, and what can we do to make it better.

I think in Vermont—one comment on that before I proceed. I think that the success of the Workforce Investment Boards in Vermont sort of goes region by region. Where there have been active groups for several decades, for example, that have a culture of working with each other, they are being successful faster than in those areas in Vermont where there hasn't been that same tradition. And I certainly am of the belief that we will all catch up. But here in Vermont, we have had recurring issues of structure versus performance, and in some cases we have designed a structure as if to say, if we build it, they will come, and the performance has been lagging in many cases.

One example we all know about is Act 200, which was designed as a structure that would do thus and so, and while the performance is out there, I believe it is lagging well behind. So the question is, with regards to WIBs, what is the connection with structures and how can we see that we achieve the performance that we are after, that many of the previous six speakers, just in the last 2 minutes, have been intent on seeing that we get to.

And I would like to go back to a couple of Bill Shouldice's comments. One is that the best ideas that he has participated in bringing to fruition have come from Main Street, not from State Street, and his question on what is it that we have to do to get employers to buy in. It really is a question; if they don't participate, this effort will surely fail.

One of the lessons, I think, that we are learning from the School to Work initiative is that, not only is the School to Work initiative, not only will it be successful if we instill a culture of experiential education, but experiential education has to be by design of the people that are promoting it as well as those that we want to teach.

This is to say that we can't expect teachers who aren't lifelong learners themselves and don't support being involved intensely in the design and the rollout, we can't expect they are going to be successful in instilling lifelong learning in their students. The same goes for work force development. Involvement is key.

So this gets to a question, then, of vouchers and how might you use them. One of the speakers this morning was saying—I guess it was Bill Laramee—that, if vouchers were out there, he would like to see them as a means to coalesce existing efforts under the auspices of Workforce Investment Boards—which are Main Street, which are us—to bring about collaborative efforts, and in a real sense, not just in a structural design sense. I guess I very much would support that effort.

I am a little skeptical, as I said, of how vouchers will work. But if they are out there, the object of the exercise certainly is to bring about real collaboration, rather than just a structure that appears to support collaboration, but which, in fact, doesn't really work.

Thanks.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you all.

Let me, David, just give you some statistics, if you want to know what the problem is, as compared to the international scene. First of all, just domestically, about 50 percent of our kids graduate from high school functionally illiterate. And if you think that is not Vermont, just ask Victor over here and he will tell you about some of our problems. Mathwise, the last TIMs exams done earlier this year, we were dead last among the industrialized nations.

Why that is, it is hard to tell, but I will give you some reasons which are pretty logical. One is that the average high school student, I think, in the United States watches 24 hours of television a week; the average European watches eight.

I just came back from China. They, incidentally, and in previous international exams came out way ahead of everybody else. When they take homework home with them, when they come back, they have to have the homework signed by not only themselves but by their parents. That works pretty well, I understand.

In North Korea, if the kid flunks an exam, the parent has to come and take the exam. If the parent fails it, they have to go to school until they can pass the exam.

There are some cultural differences here. And another one is the time that we go to school. We take two and a half to 3 months off a year; others take a month off, and then come back, and a month off. You lose a month in your training by that gap that we have. And then, if they are also going an extra month or two, that really expands that. So you are about two or 3 months behind, just by the normal time that we spend, forgetting about the homework and TV.

Mr. O'BRIEN. Those broad numbers, I thoroughly believe, and have heard. I am talking about being able to institutionalize at each WIB board, being able to measure and track that type of performance, where we stand and what are the trends in our area.

The CHAIRMAN. That's true, and the Governor and the new Commissioner of Education have addressed that. Assessment, every kid should know where they are, and we should know where every kid is.

Thank you all.

Helen Wagner, Al Stevens, Ruth Durkee and Gary Zeo.

Please come forward.

STATEMENTS FROM HELEN WAGNER; AL STEVENS, ADULT SERVICES COORDINATOR, RIVER BEND CAREER AND TECHNICAL CENTER, CHAIR, BRADFORD AREA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD; RUTH DURKEE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND TRADESWOMEN; AND GARY ZEO, CENTER DIRECTOR, NORTHLAND JOB CORPS CENTER, VERGENNES, VERMONT

The CHAIRMAN. Helen will lead off the charge here.

Ms. WAGNER. Hello, Senator Jeffords. We met you Friday.

The CHAIRMAN. Pleased to see you again.

Ms. WAGNER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. You did an excellent job.

Ms. WAGNER. Thank you.

We are going to give you a document we did in one of our history classes. I would like to read it to you.

The CHAIRMAN. Sure.

Ms. WAGNER. This is your copy.

The Bill of Rights for Adult Basic Education Students.

1. We have the right to get the education we need. Give us the opportunity. We are capable.

2. Everybody should have the opportunity to learn how to read and write.

3. We have the right to speak freely, without negative criticism.

4. We have the right to a full education. We should never be shortchanged.

5. We have the right to learn at our own pace and style. We all learn differently. We should not be pushed aside because we might take longer or learn in a different way.

6. We have the right to be shown how to do things when needed. We are capable.

7. We have the right to sit on school boards, share our views and ideas. Our votes count.

8. We have the right to be treated as equals. We are intelligent adult citizens.

9. We have the right to have our views valued.

10. We have the right to be recognized for what we do know and have accomplished.

We, the undersigned, do believe these rights should be adopted by an adult basic education system. We also recognize that these rights we have stated should not be limited, but rather be foundationed for the rights of all adult-based education students throughout the system.

We have lived by the traditional system. It does not meet the needs or rights of all people. The saddest State of affairs is that it continues today in our school system.

This document was created on November 15th, 1994, by ABE students in Rutland County, Vermont who participated in a history course called "U.S., A Country with a Past," designed and taught by Diane Roy. [Applause.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for a very excellent statement. [Applause.]

I know you, in one way or another, participated in two senatorial hearings within 4 days. [Laughter.] That may be an all time record for Vermont.

Ms. WAGNER. I am sorry. We have to leave, sir. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

They presented excellent testimony down with me in Washington on Friday on the value of adult ed.

Please proceed, Al.

Mr. STEVENS. Thank you. My name is Al Stevens. I am the Adult Services Coordinator at the River Bend Technical Center, and Chairman of the Bradford Area Workforce Investment Board.

I am speaking from a background as a hands-on practitioner in a number of these areas. I have been an ABE tutor, I have been a Coop Coordinator, I have worked with an EYE program with the Department of Employment and Training, so I have worked in the field with most of the work force programs at one time or another over the past few years.

My comments, very briefly, are first, build on the strength of the existing programs rather than start new programs. It is easy to criticize and say what's wrong with education today and things that are wrong. But there are a lot of things that are right, there are a lot of things that are going right in the programs that we are doing now, and I see it every day. And what I am speaking for is taking these strengths, the things that are going well, working well—the ABE, or tech centers, or Department of Employment and Training, or welfare—and helping them to grow and expand and get better, rather than starting new programs.

I have spent too much of my time over the years working on development of new programs. To get an existing program going, it takes a lot of time by professionals, by everybody in the community to put the program together, get it going, and then we give it a three or four or 5 year life, funding dries up and then we start another program. I remember CETA workers, I remember EYE, SYEP, Co-op, all these programs that are meant for training, and they all did a good job. And now I am working on School to Work, and it's a great thing and I am all in favor of School to Work, but we need to build on the success of the programs that we have.

The second comment I have is, right now, the model, the paradigm, has to do with the Human Investment Council and the Workforce Investment Boards. Great. I like it. I am enjoying being on a Workforce Investment Board. But let's not let that wither on the vine a few years from now. If we are going to be successful with this particular way of governing and structuring, it has to be supported, both in terms of funding and in terms of legislative structure to empower it. We have heard today about local high schools not getting involved. Somehow we either have to have the funding to get them involved or the legislative structure to get them involved.

And the third comment I have is, there is a lot of talk about consolidating programs and bringing them together. And, implied in all that seems to be we are going to somehow save a lot of money by doing that. At least where I am, where we actually meet with the students, there isn't a lot of slack, there isn't a great deal that can be gained by consolidating programs in terms of saving money without cutting the services to the students.

Now, that doesn't mean we can't work together, and at least in our area, we do work together. It bothers me to hear people saying they had to go to a number of different places to get services. In my instance, I am the Adult Services Coordinator at the tech center, we have an ABE worker in the same room with me, we have a School to Work worker in the same room with me. I refer people to welfare, I work with VET, I work with VSAC. VSAC workers come and work out of my shop. Cooperation can happen, and does happen, and I don't see where we are going to save a lot of money by consolidating, without cutting services.

I could say more, but I think I will stop and let somebody else have a chance.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. STEVENS. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Very pertinent testimony.

Ruth?

Ms. DURKEE. My name is Ruth Durkee and I am the Executive Director of Northern New England Tradeswomen. We run the Step Up for Women Program.

I would like to thank you, Senator, for the opportunity to speak today, and also for your long-term support for Step Up. Your staff members have consistently attended our graduations, and they are always a visible, vocal and supportive presence, and we thank you for that.

I have two points that I would like to make. One, I would like to reiterate a point that was made by Steve Gold in his testimony. I have concerns about a voucher-based system that doesn't take into account the fact there are successful programs run by nonprofit organizations such as mine that don't have the capacity to switch to a voucher system easily or quickly.

And so Steve's suggestion of program capacity funding for community-based organizations and nonprofits is one that makes sense to me, and I think can ensure programs like Step Up don't fall apart in a change to a voucher-based system.

I think those protections are important. Step Up has been in Vermont for twelve years. We have a good history of training women, with high placement rates and high retention rates. And I worry that, in the change in system, we risk losing our capacity to provide services as we spend more and more time just trying to recruit students.

The other thing I would like to tell you is Step Up has benefited tremendously both from Carl Perkins Gender Equity funding and the JTPA Nontraditional Employment for Women Act funding that we received. We still face challenges as we seek to help women enter nontraditional employment paying livable wages. The provisions in both pieces of legislation have been helpful to us. I encourage you to look at those as you continue with your efforts to create what comes next.

The gender equity money in Carl Perkins has been especially helpful, because the vast majority of women that come through Step Up are living below the Federal poverty level, and over 50 percent of them are on NFAC. We do have about ten percent of the women who go through the program who wouldn't qualify based on their income, and those women have been served with that gender equity money that comes through Carl Perkins. Those women tend to be women who are making minimum wage, who are stuck in minimum wage jobs, who know that, to provide for their families, they need to earn more, and have a commitment to nontraditional work, but don't yet have the skills they need to make the transition to nontraditional paid employment. So that money has been very helpful in providing opportunities for women falling into those circumstances. So I would encourage you to think about guaranteeing access to nontraditional job training for women. The provisions that have been in place have helped open doors.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

I assume you were impressed with Theresa's testimony.

Good to see you again.

Mr. ZEO. Yes, Senator. It is very good to see you again.

For those who don't know me, my name is Gary Zeo, and I am Center Director of the Northland Job Corps Center in Vergennes, Vermont. The Job Corps Program in general, and Northland in particular, has been charged with the task of educating young and disenfranchised and economically disadvantaged adults between the ages of 16 and 24. Many of the young people that Job Corps deals with have not been successful in their attempts to achieve vocational training, basic education skills, and social skills, what we call here "living skills." Job Corps is a particularly structured program which offers young people an opportunity to achieve an environment which mimics the limitations and expectations of employment.

Job Corps in general and specifically Northland's Job Corps Center are extremely proud of your success with young people who have often given up on themselves, and just as often been given up on by a number of other programs and service agencies available to them. Although we are not particularly excited about being tagged as a "last resort program," we are obviously proud of the results which our students enjoy.

Along this line, one of our greatest assets is our ability to take students out of environments which are less than conducive to their ability to gain the skills vocationally, educationally and socially which would eventually make them successful in employment, and put them in an environment which is conducive to all of these things, and has been proven to lead to an individual's success for students for over 33 years.

Job Corps has always been a model of School to Work. We have a strong work experience program, which all of our students must go through to graduate, where they go out and work for employers, local employers, for a minimum of 6 weeks. It is unpaid. I think it is a good model, because it enables us to engage more employers, especially small employers, who aren't able to pick up a wage, right away, anyway.

I think there are some good guidelines. Job Corps is a federally-funded program, and it is administered through the Department of Labor, so we have a little more leeway than some of the other programs. We are part of the system here in Vermont, and we service particular needs of particular students. We can't service everyone. I think that is what we are unique in the way we work, but we are part of the system that is available.

And I think that is extremely important, because as everyone spoke today, they all addressed different parts of the system, but everything taken together, as a whole, is the system, and it does work for some, not all, in some instances. We need to make that system flow better so that there is that one-stop opportunity when someone comes in.

Someone talked about the fact of seeing—one of the young ladies, about seeing a counselor immediately, what we call in Job Corps developing an employment plan for a young person, or any person, who is disfranchised or needs employment. I believe that that has to be part of the system, and has to be the first step in the system that we put together.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Thank you all for your testimony.

I will note that we are right on schedule, by ten seconds, anyway. We were scheduled to finish here at 12:30, and we are right there on the dot. I appreciate all of your cooperation in that regard.

I want to thank all of those who participated by attending here also. This is by far, I think, the largest crowd we have ever had at a senatorial hearing. I don't know if we did a final count, but I know it is well over 100 that have been here this morning, and coming all the way to Randolph to do it, so I want to thank you all, and look forward to working with you. It has been excellent testimony, it is some of the finest we had, and it will be utilized in guiding as we decide what must and should be done as we move into the future. Thank you.

At this time, I call the meeting ajourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:30 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

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